

RICE UNIVERSITY

**To See Music in Your Mind's Eye:  
The Genesis of Memorization as a Piano Performance Practice**

by

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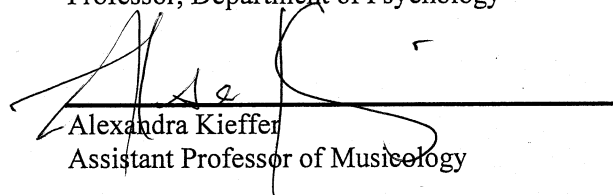
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## **ABSTRACT**

### **To See Music in Your Mind's Eye:**

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This study examines the genesis of memorization as a piano performance practice, contextualizing it within the major technological, political, aesthetic, and philosophical movements of the nineteenth century. Its significance becomes apparent when considered with several other notable changes that coincided with the development of performance practice. These include the rise and fall of virtuosos, the emergence of non-composing performers and non-performing composers, the establishment of the musical canon, the ritualization of concerts and the disappearance of the art of improvisation. The first chapter “Innate Memory” considers memory as an inherent aspect of any musical experience, and surveys the general shift from oral culture (based on memory) to literal culture (based on writing). Next, “Virtuosic Memory” considers memorization as an enhancement to virtuosic acts as super-human and sublime. Finally, “Transcendental Memory” examines memorization as an ultimate manifestation of the *Werktreue* (true-to-work) spirit - a veneration of the canonized work reflecting the performer’s scrupulous study and internalization of the score.

Traditional piano pedagogy has associated memorization with the notion of absolute music: entirely self-referential instrumental music with no extra-musical association. The piano was promoted as a “one-man orchestra.” The expectation that

music should be performed from memory has been more strongly imposed on solo pianists than on any other musicians because the elimination of the score emphasized the pianist's autonomy, even from the corporeal representation of music. It allowed piano virtuosos to be even more spectacular. Even more importantly, memorization cast pianists as "priests" of ritualized concerts: their memorized delivery enhanced the image of more direct communion with the canon. However, the "priesthood" also demoted performers as conduits to the canon. Thus, the socially marginalized, such as women and ethnic minorities, started to emerge as non-composing pianists as the practice was established. Memorization as a practice is a reflection of the nineteenth-century aesthetic philosophy and its social context. Our continuation of the practice to this day attests to the extent of its influence. Examining its historical background enables one to reevaluate one's cultural inheritance, and reexamine our own musical identity and aesthetics.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The challenge of writing about memory is perhaps similar to the challenge of writing about music or history. Their abstract natures make the negotiation between a dramatic narrative and historical accuracy even more difficult. It was challenging to write about the historical genesis of memorization as a piano performance practice. My sources were scarce, and the historical sources I did find often turned out to have privileged the narrative over accuracy.

As soon as I realized the significance of my topic and its implications on the history and culture of classical music, including the pervasiveness of the mythical consensus surrounding its history, I was overwhelmed by the responsibility of doing my topic justice. I could not have finished this thesis without the persistent encouragement and strong guidance from Dr. Elizabeth Festa, and Dr. Alexandra Kieffer. Dr. Festa shared with me her expert knowledge on how to realize my personal convictions into a logical and communicative argument. Dr. Kieffer helped me realize how being a performer, without the background in musicology, can be an asset for this topic, because of my first-hand experience of memorization and performer's perspective on music and its history. I would also like to thank my committed thesis advisor Dr. Peter Loewen, as well as Mr. Brian Connelly, Dr. Kurt Stallman, Dr. Deborah Valenze, Dr. David Ferris, and Dr. Marcia Citron, for sharing their valuable time and wisdom to help me. Finally, I would like to thank my family, by blood and otherwise, for being by my side through all of the challenges I faced during the course of writing this thesis, always making me laugh, and never letting me forget their faith in me and my work.

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## INTRODUCTION

As a pianist, I am often approached with the question, especially right after concerts: “How do you memorize all the music?” But I have never been asked “*Why* do you memorize all the music?” Curiously, the same *why* has also been missing from musicology. My thesis will address this *why* by tracing the evolution of the practice of faithful memorization of written music, a unique concept to Western classical music.

It is important to research the genesis of memorization because it helps us reevaluate our cultural inheritance and practice, and reexamine our own musical identity and aesthetics. What led the practice to become obligatory to all pianists and piano students in the late nineteenth century may be deduced by examining its historical context. The Age of Revolution significantly influenced the business of music, and the abstract concept of what music ought to be. The rise of memorized piano performance in the nineteenth century coincided with several notable changes in the development of performance practice. They included the rise and fall of virtuosos, the emergence of non-composing performers and non-performing composers, the establishment of canonic composers and repertoire, the ritualization of concerts and the disappearance of the art of improvisation. Playing with the score came to be regarded as a negative reflection on the performer; it was thought to signify their lack of ability, devotion, understanding of music, and talent.

The focus of this thesis is on the performance practice of solo pianists. Memorization of texted songs is unrelated to my thesis because the importance of memorization, as preached in the traditional piano pedagogy, has been associated closely

with the notion of *absolute* music as advocated by German Romantic Idealists: instrumental music with no extra-musical meaning, “autonomous and entirely self-referential.”<sup>1</sup> In addition, the solo piano held a distinct place in the establishment of serious music. The piano was promoted as a one-man orchestra.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, certain genres of piano repertoire, such as piano sonatas, were associated with symphonies, the epitome of serious music. This, in conjunction with the establishment of the piano solo recital, allowed pianists to become autonomous performers. The expectation that music should be performed from memory has been more strongly imposed on solo pianists than on any other musicians,<sup>3</sup> partially because the elimination of the score emphasized the pianist’s autonomy, even from the corporeal representation of music. It allowed piano virtuosos to be even more spectacular. Even more importantly, memorization legitimized pianists’ status as “priests” of ritualized concerts: their memorized delivery enhanced the image of more direct communion with the canon.

To be precise about the focus of my argument and examples examined, I have limited my discussion to European phenomena with the main focus on the first half of the nineteenth-century, and to German-speaking regions. Occasionally I do refer to Ancient

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Evan Bonds, *Absolute Music: The History of an Idea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 2.

<sup>2</sup> “[The piano] embraces the range of an orchestra; the ten fingers of a single man suffice to render the harmonies produced by the combined forces of more than 100 concerted instruments.... We make arpeggios like the harp, prolonged notes like wind instruments, staccatos and a thousand other effects which one seemed the special prerogative of such and such an instrument.” Liszt’s letter to Adolphe Pictet first published in *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris* 6 (1838):58, quoted in Robert S. Winter, “Orthodoxies, Paradoxes, and Contradictions: Performance Practices in Nineteenth-Century Piano Music,” in *Nineteenth-Century Piano Music*, ed. R. Larry Todd [New York: Schirmer Books, 1990], 17.

<sup>3</sup> “Of the 38 flute participants, 29% (or 11) specified that they always, or nearly always, perform concerti from memory.... Many of the flutists surveyed, specifically 47% (or 18 out of 38), sometimes memorize a concerto and sometimes do not, depending on the circumstance and repertoire.” Catherine Ramirez, “The Soloist’s Path to Optimal Musical Communication.” (D.M.A diss., Rice University, 2012). <http://hdl.handle.net/1911/70401>, 25-26.

Greece and other historical periods, and other regions of Europe to demonstrate the universality of a notion or practice, or to survey a very gradual transformation over the course of centuries. My sources are limited to those available in English. My priority was to make my thesis as relevant to our contemporary performance practice, and people that engage in this practice. For this reason, I have chosen to discuss composers, performers, and theorists that are still well-known today.

As a pianist with an active career in performance and pedagogy, I have firsthand experience on my topic. As a result, I am able to contribute some insight into the practice that may not be obvious to non-pianists. Some of them are more appropriate here in the introduction than in the body of the thesis. For example, memorization as we think of it today is identified by the physical elimination of the score from a faithful recreation of a musical work. I will follow this tradition in my thesis because the presence or the lack of a score is factual. However, the truth is more ambiguous. For pianists, there always has to be some level of memorization in an execution of a piece.<sup>4</sup> This is due to the structure of the instrument. The music stand is placed above the pianist's eyelevel where as the keyboard is below. It is impossible to look at both at the same time. Pianists do develop a reliable tactile memory of the keyboard, but for certain technical challenges such as successive leaps, seeing the keyboard becomes crucial. Hence, it is possible for a pianist to have a memory slip with a score on the stand. Likewise, it is also possible to play entirely from memory with the score on the music stand.

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<sup>4</sup> I condition my claim: there has to be some level of memorization if the note-density and speed in the score was beyond the pianist's capability to sight-read.



So why eliminate the score? There have always been some pianists that defied the tradition. Dame Myra Hess and Sviatoslav Richter used the scores for their performances at the end of their careers. There are many other established pianists today who use the score when they choose to: Peter Serkin, Emanuel Ax, to name a few. Gilbert Kalish has long played from the score. At the State University of New York at Stony Brook, where he is a professor, he helped establish a new policy in the 1980's, which allowed students to play with the score in their required recitals.<sup>5</sup> It remains a notable exception for school auditions, juries and competitions, to this day. On the other hand, the elimination of the score is not only an aesthetic or philosophical symbol. It also serves practical purposes. For one, the erect music stand becomes a sound barrier between the pianist and the soundboard. In addition, page turning, whether done by the pianist or by a designated page-turner, is always a distraction in a performance. In this thesis, I stand neutral on memorization; its aim is to rediscover the history of a particular practice.

My thesis is organized in three chapters: the first chapter, "Innate Memory: Instinctive Memorization"; the second chapter, "Virtuosic Memory: Devilish Memory in the Body"; and the third chapter "Transcendental Memory." The tripartite structure roughly correlates to three different kinds of musical memory: instinctive, physical, and intellectual. Although the three chapters categorize and present these different types of musical memories as a way to organize the historical evidences for my argument, my thesis will reveal that in the first half of the nineteenth century, all of these types of memorization were present simultaneously, and were sometimes even enmeshed.

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<sup>5</sup> Allan Kozinn. 1999. High-Wire Act of Playing from Memory. *The New York Times*. January 4. <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/01/04/arts/critic-s-notebook-high-wire-act-of-playing-from-memory.html> [accessed, January 19, 2017]

Chapter 1 examines memory as an innate aspect of our musical experience. It is a type of musical memory that is contrary to what we think of as the practice of memorization today. At one time, philosophers thought that music could exist only in time and memory.<sup>6</sup> In time, pragmatists defied this ancient wisdom when it devised a meticulous system of musical notation. The practice of notation set Western music apart from many other musical cultures. It allowed for musical compositions to become more developed and complex, worthy of scrupulous studies and faithful recreation. Through the development of its notation, Western music moved increasingly away from oral transmission toward notational dissemination, and its performance became increasingly more presentational and less participatory. A reactionary idea was posited by the Enlightenment philosophers like Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778): that musical experience should be natural and effortless, and musical abilities should be innate. Rousseau's influence was significant in the field of music. His pedagogical philosophy – sensory experience before intellectual understanding – influenced Friedrich Wieck's piano pedagogy. As a result, his daughter Clara Wieck-Schumann was taught to play and compose by ear for two years before she was taught how to read music. She became one of the most influential pianists in the history of classical music, and is often referred to as the first pianist to have performed in public from memory; but for her, at least in the beginning of her career as a prodigy, memory came naturally.

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<sup>6</sup> “Music is the practical knowledge of melody, consisting of sound and song; and it is called music by derivation from the Muses. Since sound is a thing of sense it passes along into past time, and it is impressed on the memory. From this it was pretended by the poets that the Muses were the daughters of Jupiter and Memory. For unless sounds are held in the memory by man they perish, because they cannot be written down.” Isidore of Seville (560-636 A.D.), *Etymologiarum sive originum libri xx*, trans. E. Brehaut (New York: Columbia University, 1912), 136. Quoted in Piero Weiss, and Richard Taruskin, *Music in the Western World: A History in Documents* (New York: Schirmer Books. 1984), 41.

On the other hand, there were the virtuosos who played from memory to enhance their spectacular virtuosity. Chapter 2 explores memorization that made the challenges of piano playing more visible and impressive, beyond comprehension and “sublime.”

Behind the vogue of virtuosos was the Age of Revolution that promoted the notion of the autonomous individual and his exceptionality. Memorization emphasized the autonomy of virtuosos like Paganini and Liszt. They were in command of the music, the instrument, the enamored audience and the growing market, defying social conventions and winning fame and fortune. The mechanism of the piano evolved rapidly during the Industrial Revolution, enabling the piano virtuosos to play more loudly, faster, and more spectacularly in their technical display. The audience loved identifying with virtuosos who seemed to “out-machine the machines” in the climate of anxiety over technological domination of humanity. Appropriate to the age of machines, long hours of drill and rote practice was encouraged. Pianists boasted of practicing ten, twelve, and even sixteen hours a day to cultivate new techniques to match the new mechanical features on the instrument.

Liszt’s invention of the solo recital in 1840 was a virtuoso’s ultimate declaration of artistic independence from the tradition of the miscellaneous concert, with its many supporting artists. Observing that the root of the word “to recite” suggests memorized delivery in front of an audience, scholars such as William Weber and Alan Walker have argued that the term recital also implied a memorized performance. Eventually, however, with the mass-production of pianos and pianists, the exceptionality of virtuoso pianists came into question. Practice aids such as metronomes and dactylion, and method books widely circulated under a credo that everything that could be analyzed could be mass-

produced, including seemingly-impossible technics. Promoters of serious music, aesthetic philosophers, music theorists and writers on music, demoted virtuosos as charlatans and mercenaries, who did not understand music or its virtue. Denigration of the corporeal in promotion of the intellect and spirituality has been a widespread phenomenon since the Ancient Greeks, but the anti-virtuoso rhetoric of the nineteenth century was especially vehement. This was because virtuosity directly conflicted with the German Romantic Idealist's notion of serious music as a gateway to transcendence from our corporeal, phenomenal world to the noumenal.

I present memorization in the third chapter as a practice that allowed performers to express their veneration of the canon, and to achieve spiritual transcendence. Memorization became the ultimate act of *Werktreue* ("to be true to work"), a performer's submission and devotion to the canonized composers and their work. German Romantic Idealists' assertion that contemplation on an autonomous beauty can free us from our subjectivity, established classical music, the most autonomous of all arts, as we continue to practice it today. In the negotiation between the attempt to understand music and the desire to bask in its ineffability, philosophical discourse on music became increasingly theoretical, abstracted from the act of performance and the performers. The canon, the concept of music as works of fine art, ritualization of concerts and subordination of performer to composers and their canonized works, were established as a result. Memorization became an act that demonstrated the self-effacing performer's dedicated scrutiny necessary to decipher and internalize the canonized score and the composer's intent. This elevated the canon and subordinated the performer. At the same time, memorization eliminated the score: the only corporeal representation of music. That

made the avoidance of human generation and reception of music in real time, impossible. The practice of memorization as a reflection of Romantic ideals exemplified the paradox of verbose philosophical and theoretical discourse on the ineffability of music. In this chapter, I treat Beethoven as the epitome of canonized composers who both influenced, and were influenced by, German Romantic Idealism. With Beethoven and German Romantic Idealism, composers became established as the oracles, and performers were subordinated as the orators. The submissive role was appropriate for women, and there was a rise of female pianists in this era. Clara Schumann became the epitome, representing the spirit of *Werktreue* as the priestess of ritualized concerts who channeled the canonized composers, including her deceased husband whom she helped to canonize.

After my research, I feel certain that it is impossible to precisely determine how and when exactly the practice of memorization, as we practice today, started and was established. The purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate the scope of the topic and offer my research and theories as a starting point for further research.

## CHAPTER 1: INNATE MEMORY

An article in the 1880 *Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* recounts an anecdote attributed to the “late Professor Marx,” in which he falls prey to a deception by the renowned pianist Friedrich Kalkbrenner in 1834. The pianist was “anxious to make a good impression, as the Professor was then editor of the new ‘Berliner Musikzeitung’ and an influential personage”:

[Kalkbrenner] in moving terms deplored the decay of the good old art of improvisation, saying that since Hummel had retired he was the only one who still cultivated it in the true classical spirit. He opens the piano and improvises for a quarter of an hour with fluent fancy and great neatness, interweaving all manner of themes, even a little fugue, much to the Professor's edification. Next day a parcel of music just printed at Paris arrives for review. The Professor, greatly interested, opens the topmost piece—'Effusio Musica, par Fred. Kalkbrenner': when lo and behold! He has yesterday's improvisation before him, fugue and all, note for note!<sup>7</sup>

One of the first pianists to “achieve an independent international career,” Kalkbrenner attained unprecedented success with his outstanding playing and embodiment of classical style, earning him official recognitions such as the Légion d'Honneur (1828), the Order of the Red Eagle of Prussia (1833) and the Order of Leopold of Belgium (1836), “despite his attraction to brilliance and his pandering to contemporary taste.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> George Grove, *A Dictionary of Music and Musicians (A.D. 1450-1880) by Eminent Writers, English and Foreign with Illustrations and Woodcuts*, (London: Macmillan and Co., 1880), s.vv. “Kalkbrenner.” [https://archive.org/stream/musicians02grovuoft/musicians02grovuoft\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/musicians02grovuoft/musicians02grovuoft_djvu.txt) [accessed on January 23, 2017]

<sup>8</sup> Paul Dekeyser, “Kalkbrenner, Frédéric.” *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/14623>. [Accessed January 19, 2017]

The anecdote demonstrates how the norm surrounding improvisation and memorization, two forms of musical rendition without the use of the score, was in transition in the nineteenth century. Today, when a classical pianist performs without the music on the stand, it signifies faithful memorization of an already-composed piece. This was not always so. Playing without the score would have been taken as improvisation, before memorization became an established practice and replaced improvisation. The ability to improvise signified a pianist's creativity and was more valued than the ability to memorize a notated score. In the anecdote, Kalkbrenner negates his already-published composition to present himself as an improvising pianist. This reflects a dynamic between the audience, performer and the composer from the Classical period, before the establishment of Romanticism, canons and the practice of memorization as we know and practice today. That was when the patron was the most powerful in determining what music was to be performed by whom, and when music was considered to exist in useful terms only when it was being played.

The article recounts the anecdote in a way that takes the reader's attention away from the curious fact that the established Professor Marx failed to distinguish a memorized performance from improvisation. However, Marx's unabashed way of recounting this episode may be justifiable considering that there is another famous anecdote of Mozart almost dismissing young Beethoven in 1787, suspecting Beethoven's self-claimed improvisation to be a memorized showpiece.<sup>9</sup> These anecdotes, told and

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<sup>9</sup> Otto Jahn, *Life of Mozart*, trans. Pauline D. Townsend (London: Oxford University Press, 1882), 346. "Beethoven made his appearance in Vienna as a youthful musician of promise in the spring of 1787, but was only able to remain there a short time; he was introduced to Mozart, and played to him at his request. Mozart, considering the piece he performed to be a studied showpiece, was somewhat cold in his expression of admiration. Beethoven, remarking this, begged for a theme for improvisation, and, inspired by the presence of the master he revered so highly played in such a manner a gradually to engross

retold,<sup>10</sup> demonstrate how improvisation and memorization were considered indistinguishable even by a genius like Mozart, or established theorist, like A.B. Marx. Their significance as contextual evidence almost nullifies the fact that they are likely apocryphal;<sup>11</sup> *Effusio Musica* had already been composed and published in 1823 to great reception,<sup>12</sup> and A.B. Marx was no longer the “editor of the new 'Berliner Musikzeitung'” in 1834.<sup>13</sup> Most importantly, Kalkbrenner’s anecdote places confidence in A.B. Marx to recognize “fugue and all, note for note!” in a score from listening to the piece only once the previous day, while Kalkbrenner’s memorization of a complicated composition of considerable length merited no recognition. It does not only attest to the difference in their respective posthumous reputations, but also to the hierarchical positioning of a music theorist over a musician, and theory over practice: a progressive tendency that contributed to the eventual establishment of memorization as we think of it today.

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Mozart’s whole attention; turning quietly to the bystanders, he said emphatically, ‘Mark that young man; he will make himself a name in the world!’”

<sup>10</sup> Harold C. Schonberg, *The Great Pianists: From Mozart to the Present - Revised and Updated*. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), 188. Pulitzer Prize-winning writer and critic Harold Schonberg included the anecdote in his widely read and quoted book *The Great Pianists* both in the first edition published in 1963, and the revised updated edition published it in 1987.

<sup>11</sup> Both anecdotes of Kalkbrenner and Beethoven are anecdotes with questionable sources. Kalkbrenner’s is attributed to a German professor of piano at the Royal Academy of Music in London, Edward George Dannreuther (1844-1905) not yet born in 1834. Beethoven’s is unknown.

<sup>12</sup> In 1824, *Effusio Musica* had already received a glowing review as “a composition combining the greatest difficulties of execution and style, full of vivid flashes of imagination, touches of fine and elevated expression, bounds of elastic fancy and strokes of scientific knowledge. It has met with extraordinary success in Germany, and has received the highest commendation by the greatest judges [in England].” Quoted from [Anonymous] “Kalkbrenner’s *Effusio Musica*,” *The Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review*, 6, London: Baldwin, Cradock and Joy. 1824, 139. [https://books.google.com/books?id=aLcPAAAYAAJ&dq=Kalkbrenner,+Effusio+Musica&source=gb\\_s\\_avlinks](https://books.google.com/books?id=aLcPAAAYAAJ&dq=Kalkbrenner,+Effusio+Musica&source=gb_s_avlinks) [accessed January 19, 2017]

<sup>13</sup> The periodical was in existence only between 1824 and 1830.



Memorization became a noteworthy performance practice in the nineteenth century. However, memory is always an inherent part of perceiving music. To bring attention to the aspect of memory is like bringing specific attention to the physics of sound in music, or the physiology of sound perception in a musical experience, both of which also happened in the nineteenth century. These thoughts about music are abstract, conceptual, theoretical and unique to the nineteenth century. To appreciate how unique the specific attention to memory in musical performance was to Romanticism, I will first put musical memory in historical context to demonstrate how naturally integral memory is to music and general musical experience. Then, through the rest of this first chapter, I will examine musical memorization that is contrary to the practice of memorization as we think of it today. These are examples of memorized performances that were done because the music was so simple and formulaic that they could have been improvised. Memorization, in fact, was seen as a sign of innate and instinctive musicality. It was so easy that cultural others, such as women, children, blind musicians, and autistic savants could do it. This was before the notion of “serious” music, when music was more for the enjoyment of the audience, not for the promotion of fine art, or the veneration of canonized works.

### 1. Notation: Improvisation versus Memorization.

There are some universal truths about music. For example, because music is an ephemeral art of time, to perceive the organization of sound that is music, one’s memory must be engaged. In the *Etymologiae*, Isidore of Seville (c. 560-636) stated that “since sound is a thing of sense it passes along into past time, and it is impressed on the

memory.... For unless sounds are held in the memory by man they perish, because they cannot be written down.”<sup>14</sup> This quote remains true today for many forms of musical engagements in the world: *karaoke*, audio branding, children singing and dancing to nursery rhymes, and orally transmitted folk music are just a few examples. What set Western music apart from other music is its meticulously precise system of notation. It allowed composers to construct pieces that were intricate and artful. The notation also permitted the exact recreation, and memorization, of a piece of music by those who have never heard it before, allowing for wide dissemination through space and time. At the same time, the establishment of notation burdened Western classical music with the risk of dissociating itself from universal musicality. Even after the precise system of notation was basically completed by the mid-1300s, outside of Christian sacred music, Western music remained dependent on the memories of those who engaged in it for a long time. Without the ties to the church that vocal music was bound by, instrumentalists performed almost exclusively without written music, often improvising.

Instrumentalists have always improvised since the beginning of music. They improvised to accompany songs and dances. They improvised on famous songs and dance tunes. Church organists improvised to accommodate the unpredictable length of music required to accompany the collection and processions in church services. Two of the earliest and most influential keyboard players, Francesco Landini (1325-1397) and Antonio de Cabezón (1510-1566) were blind and renowned for their improvisations.<sup>15</sup> In

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<sup>14</sup> Isidore of Seville, quoted in Weiss, and Taruskin, 41.

<sup>15</sup> *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, s.v. “Sources, MS,” <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/50158pg21> [accessed March 3, 2017] gives a list of transcriptions of “improvisations” of Trecento Italian songs, including some by Landini, that can be found in Faenza Codex.

music history, the Baroque period (c. 1600 – c. 1750) is sometimes referred to as the “age of the thorough bass.” The practice of improvising accompaniment from a figured bass line occurred in the context of the solo song and recitative with the birth and rise of operas in this period. These were improvised by keyboardists or lutenists. In the classical period, improvisation in cadenzas and free fantasies became more soloistic and virtuosic, reaching its height in the nineteenth century Romantic period. From J.S. Bach (1735-1750) to Mozart (1756-1791), Beethoven (1770-1827) to Liszt (1811-1886) and Clara Schumann (1819-1896), all famous keyboardists were renowned for their improvisations.

To improvise, the improviser must have a secure understanding of the melodies and motives on which the improvisation is to be based, its harmonic language, and the general structure of the piece. The word “understanding” in the above sentence may be replaced with the phrase *memoria rerum* (event memory). The art of improvisation, and its use of *memoria rerum*, is antithetical to the rote, scrupulous *memoria verborum* (verbatim memory) that has come to be so important in the education of classical musicians today. The two dichotomous types of memory, *memoria rerum* and *memoria verborum* were already identified in the earliest memory treatises from the Middle Ages.<sup>16</sup> It is crucial to clarify here that the promotion of *memoria verborum* in instrumental performance rose against the decline of public improvisation and musical use of *memoria rerum* in the history of the performance practice of Western classical music. It is a microscopic reflection of the shift that occurred in our world from oral culture (based on memory) to literal culture (based on writing), when the written words and printed materials became authorities. In the historical push towards *memoria*

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<sup>16</sup> Joshua Foer, *Moonwalking with Einstein: The Art and Science of Remembering Everything* (New York: Penguin Press, 2011), 122.

*verborum* as a society at large, improvisation became an art that has been lost from the classical piano pedagogy.

The establishment of notation was the initial catalyst to push music towards *memoria verborum*, but that effect was at first contained to sacred music. The more general push towards *memoria verborum* occurred with the invention of the printing press in 1440. Manuscripts copied by hands were not only precious, affordable only by nobles and churches, but also erroneous. The printing press provided an abundance of precisely uniform copies of writings and music at a much lower cost.<sup>17</sup> Driven by the market, writers and musicians wrote their stories and music down for publication. The reduced cost of reproduction permitted people without great wealth to acquire private libraries for the first time in history. Music became household recreation. The more available these printed materials became, the less room there was for the oral transmission of music or information.

The invention of the printing press heightened the status of instrumental music. Partially due to the lack of ties to the church, instrumentalists had been marginalized in the social hierarchy with little presence in historical records as individuals.<sup>18</sup> In the fifteenth century, printed books began to mention details about instruments, their constructions, practice and social use. Once the technology to print music became available around 1500, instrumentalists began to commoditize what they had been

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<sup>17</sup> “[In] the first century after Gutenberg, the number of books in existence increased fourteen-fold.” Foer, 147.

<sup>18</sup> Howard Mayer Brown and Louise K. Stein, *Music in the Renaissance*, 2nd ed., (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1999), 250.

keeping as trade secrets for centuries, in the form of method books. With the explosion of interested amateurs who purchased them, the status of instrumental music and professional instrumentalists were elevated. Much of the printed music for amateurs and method books focused on written-out improvisatory pieces and variations and/or teaching methods for amateur musicians on how to systematically embellish and improvise on famous tunes, including Joan Ambrosio Dalza's *Intabulatura de lauto libro quarto* (1508), Luys de Milan's *Libro de musica de vihuela de mano intitulado El maestro* (1536), and Diego Ortiz's *Trattado de Glossas* (1553). Professional players continued to distinguish themselves from the amateurs through their level of creativity and artistry in their improvisation.<sup>19</sup>

With the invention of the printing press and the business of music publishing, both the precise notation and the method of instrumental improvisation were now in wide circulation. Once notation became established, a struggle emerged between fidelity to the written music and creative impulse to improvise, foreshadowing the later power struggle between composers and performers, authoritative score and spontaneous performance, and theory and practice. The power struggle resulted in waxing and waning of *memoria rerum* versus *memoria verborum* throughout the development of performance practice in Western music. Warnings issued by composers against performers taking too much liberty in interpreting or embellishing the notated score, even in secular music, can be seen as early as the time of Guillaume de Machaut (c. 1300-77). In a letter to the object of his infatuation, Peronnelle D'Armentières, he stated "I have made a song to your order, and by God it is long since I have made so good a thing to my satisfaction; ...and I beg

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<sup>19</sup> Brown and Stein, 251.

therefore that you deign to hear it, and learn the thing just as it is, without adding or taking away.”<sup>20</sup> Machaut was the first composer to compile a collection of his own output and discuss his own creative method indicating his own sense of self-importance over the performers who were to play his creations. Just as writing enabled poetry to become artful and poets to become artists, by the time of Machaut, the development of notation had come to allow musical compositions to be truly artful and elevated the individual composers’ statuses as artists.

Long after Machaut, and even long after the invention of the printing press in the sixteenth century, the audience’s desire for improvisation persisted for several additional centuries. Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714-1788), in his *True Art of Playing Keyboard Instrument* (1759), complained about both the audience expectations for improvisation and the risk it posed to the integrity of a composition: “The public demands that practically every idea be repeatedly altered, sometimes without investigating whether the structure of the piece or the skill of the performer permits such alteration. It is this embellishing alone, especially if it is coupled with a long and sometimes bizarrely ornamented cadenza, that often squeezes the bravos out of most listeners.”<sup>21</sup>

Many improvisations were prepared and memorized. In his *Systematic Introduction to Improvisation on the Piano Forte*, op. 200 (1836), Carl Czerny (1791-1857) states that preludes, whether improvised or “drilled into the performer” must be executed “with such ease and lack of restraint that the prelude maintain the character of

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<sup>20</sup> Piero Weiss (ed.), *Letters of Composers through Six Centuries* (Philadelphia: Chilton Books, 1967), 1-2. Quoted in Weiss and Taruskin, 76.

<sup>21</sup> C.P.E. Bach, forward to *Six Sonatas for the Keyboard*, Wq 50 (1760), quoted in Schonberg (1987), 31.

the momentary fancy.”<sup>22</sup> Referring to pianists from Beethoven’s time, Schonberg writes “Most pianists did prepare, knowing full well that sooner or later they would be called upon to supply an improvisation on ‘Batti, batti’ or a similar well-known tune. And all pianists had at their command a thorough supply of passagework by the yard which they could snip off and use for any possible contingency.”<sup>23</sup>

As common as improvisation was, it seemed to have been considered a separate art from a faithful recreation of a notated composition. Some of the most legendary improvisers also valued scrupulous reading of notated scores. J.S. Bach was accused by Adolph Schiebe in 1737 for meticulously writing out the details of performance: “Every ornament, every little grace, and everything that one thinks of as belonging to the method of playing, he expresses completely in notes.”<sup>24</sup> Mozart’s letter to his father in 1778 describes a good reading as “playing the piece in the tempo in which it ought to be played, and in playing all the notes, appoggiaturas and so forth, exactly as they are written.”<sup>25</sup>

Beethoven’s improvisation was described by Czerny as moving listeners to tears with its brilliance “for apart from the beauty and originality of his ideas, and his ingenious manner of expressing them, there was something magical about his playing.”<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Carl Czerny, *A Systematic Introduction to Improvisation on the Piano Forte*, op. 200, trans. Alice L. Mitchell (New York: Longman Inc., 1983), 11.

<sup>23</sup> Schonberg (1987), 80.

<sup>24</sup> Johann Adolph Scheibe, “Letters from an Able *Musikant* Abroad,” (May 14, 1737): (BDII, no. 400) quoted in Hans T. David, Arthur Mendel, and Christoph Wolff, *The New Bach Reader: A Life of Johann Sebastian Bach in Letters and Documents* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998), 338.

<sup>25</sup> Mozart’s letter to his father (273a) Mannheim, 17. (January 1778) quoted in Schonberg (1987), 46.

<sup>26</sup> As quoted in Schonberg (1987), 81.

Yet, he was carefully meticulous about his notation, painstakingly revising it repeatedly, making sure his composition was to be recreated exactly as he notated it. He was the first composer to write out an obligatory full cadenza into the score for his “Emperor” Concerto No. 5 in E-flat Major, op. 73 (1809-11), with the famous direction “*no si fa una cadenza* (do not make a cadenza).”<sup>27</sup> Ferdinand Ries, Beethoven’s piano student from 1801-4, told Beethoven’s biographer Anton Schindler that, although his playing was full of beauty and inimitable expression, he “seldom introduced notes or ornaments not set down in the composition.”<sup>28</sup> Beethoven’s attitude was eventually to be adapted by classical performers as the proper attitude toward a score. In the process, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the discrepancy grew between composers’ increasingly detailed attention to each note of their masterpieces and audiences’ expectation of what music ought to be. Placed in the middle, performers negotiated between improvisation and the score, the market and musical integrity, and their role as a creator and a recreator.

## 2. Memorization or Improvisation? Composers Playing from Memory

Many of the early pianists were composers themselves. They composed, performed their own compositions and their contemporaries’, and improvised. They had advantages over the slowly emerging non-composing pianists. Seen as more creative and

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<sup>27</sup> Jan Ladislav Dussek’s (1760-1812) Piano Sonata No. 24, op. 61 (1806) also bears, underneath the tempo marking on the first page, an indication: “senza ornamenti”.

<sup>28</sup> Anton Schindler, Ignaz Moscheles, and Heinrich Döring, *The Life of Beethoven: Including the Biography by Schindler, Beethoven's Correspondence with His Friends, Numerous Characteristic Traits, and Remarks on His Musical Works* (London: H. Colburn, 1841), 128.



authoritative, they had more leverage over the rising tension between improvisation and the score. In addition, their understanding, or *memoria rerum*, of musical syntax, structures and harmony, would have made them better improvisers. This understanding also would have allowed them to memorize a written piece more easily. In fact, there are many accounts of these composer-pianists playing, often their own compositions, from memory. However, in these cases, it is difficult to determine how faithful they were to a pre-notated composition, playing from memory in the sense we use the term “memorization” in application to piano performance today.

There are many testimonies regarding Mozart’s capacity for musical memory, perhaps the most famous being his transcription of Gregorio Allegri’s *Miserere* in the Sistine Chapel as a fourteen-year-old.<sup>29</sup> Later in life, Mozart surprised the audience when performing two of his piano concertos in 1788 in Leipzig by placing on his music stand

...instead of his part, a sheet of paper scribbled with a few notes, being the beginnings of some of the passages. ‘Oh’, said he, upon being questioned by a friend, ‘soli parts are safely locked up in my desk at Vienna. I am obliged to manage it thus for when I am travelling some how [*sic.*] or other people contrive to steal copies and print them.’”<sup>30</sup>

Mozart’s letter to his father from April 8, 1781 reveals Mozart premiering two of his violin sonatas from memory, having only had the time to write down the violin part for

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<sup>29</sup> Quoted in Frederick G. Shinn, *Musical Memory and Its Cultivation: Also an Investigation into the Forms of Memory Employed in Pianoforte Playing, and a Theory as to the Relative Extent of the Employment of Such Forms* (London: Charles Vincent, 1898), 63. In 1770, Mozart was on an Italian tour with his father, and attended a performance of *Miserere* by Allegri with a complicated score for chorus in nine parts. His father wrote, “that this celebrated *Miserere* is so jealously guarded, that members of the chapel are forbidden, under pain of excommunication, to take their parts out of the chapel, or to copy, or allow it to be copied. We have got it, notwithstanding. Wolfgang has written it down...”

<sup>30</sup> Johann Friedrich Rochlitz, “Mozart’s Memory,” *The Musical World*, February 25, 1841. 126-127. RIPM - Retrospective Index to Music Periodicals, EBSCOhost (accessed September 14, 2014). Rochlitz (1769-1842) was a musicologist who founded *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*. He published important anecdotes about, and letters supposedly by, Mozart, that have since been considered fraudulent.

the violinist, Brunetti.<sup>31</sup> In cases such as these, where the composers memorized their own parts to written accompanimental parts, it is difficult to say which type of memory was engaged; was it *memoria rerum*, such that the solo part was improvised according to the prepared harmony and figures of the accompaniment, or *memoria verborum*, recreating a thoroughly composed solo part? Many consider Paganini to have been one of the first performers to be noted for his memorized performance. A reviewer in London remarked on Paganini's performance "without a reading desk or book stand; this gives an air of *improvising* to his performance, which we hope to see imitated..."<sup>32</sup> We do not know how the reviewer could be sure that Paganini was not improvising.<sup>33</sup> However, we can deduce from the review that the elimination of the score made the performance seem freer. Maybe to the audience, that was all that mattered at this point in the history of music.

### 3. Memorization by Non-Composing Performers: Exoticism and Empiricism

Composers' statuses rose as their printed and published notation became more widely spread and established as authorities. In an inverse proportion to that phenomenon, non-composing re-creative performers became increasingly subordinated. Meanwhile, the ideal of social equality of the Enlightenment and the idealization of the Others as "noble savages" allowed for an emergence of the underrepresented, such as

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<sup>31</sup> John Irving, "Sonatas," in *The Cambridge Mozart Encyclopedia*, ed. Cliff Eisen and Simon P. Keefe. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 474.

<sup>32</sup> "Concerts at the King's Theatre: Paganini," *The Athenaeum: A Journal of Literature, Science, the Fine Arts*. London, June 11, 1831, 381. Emphasis original.

<sup>33</sup> The article does not mention Paganini being accompanied.

women, child prodigies and ethnic minorities among the non-composing performers. Many of them performed from memory, and it was seen as a sign of their innate and instinctive musicality as well as their lack of creativity.

Maria Theresia von Paradis (1759-1824) was an Austrian keyboardist, and a singer. She had no option of using the score in her performance because she was blind from childhood. In addition, being a non-composer until later in life, she was performing only pieces by other composers for most of her career. Paradis began performing for Viennese salons and concerts by 1775 and toured much of Europe. Salieri, Mozart and possibly Haydn wrote pieces for her. Accounts of Paradis often include mentions of her “exceptionally accurate hearing, as well as ready comprehension and a good memory (she is said to have played over 60 concertos by heart).”<sup>34</sup> The adjective “good” in describing her memory is noteworthy. Her ability to play sixty concertos without the benefit of having ever seen any score does not constitute for an “extraordinary” memory, but just a “good” memory. This could signify that many others also played from memory. It could also mean that because of her gender, and possibly her impairment, her abilities were judged with certain biases. In any case, despite her having clearly performed from memory, she did not receive the credit for the first memorized performance in public.

Paradis’s successful career may have been indebted not only to her talent but also the fascination of the time with the innate musicality associated with “exotic Others.” Her gender, as well as being blind, made her and her musical abilities more fascinating in the

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<sup>34</sup> Rudolph Angermüller, et al. "Paradis, Maria Theresia." *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press.  
<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/20868>.  
 [accessed January 21, 2017], parenthesis original.

culture of exoticism. The philosophy of empiricism and ideal of social equality shunned culture associated with elitism, and promoted nature as the opposing and superior alternative.<sup>35</sup> The traditional association of nature with women, children, the Others helped idealize them in the nineteenth century with the rise of primitivism in the arts and depiction of cultural Others as “noble savages” in Romantic literature. The historical association of women with nature is depicted by Marcia Citron in her *Gender and the Musical Canon* (1993). Francis Bacon (1561-1626) wrote “Nature as female and Nature as knowable. Knowable Nature is presented as female, and the task of science is the exercise of the right kind of male domination over her.”<sup>36</sup> Citron demonstrates how his utterance resonated with dualisms between nature and culture, and women and men, drawn throughout history from the Renaissance to Van Gogh, the Bible to Nietzsche.<sup>37</sup>

Besides the exoticism/primitivism, the separation of labor between composing and performing and subsequent emergence of non-composing pianists contributed to the rise of women, child prodigies, and other minorities as professional pianists. Although they were usually not considered capable of intellectual understanding or creativity, they

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<sup>35</sup> Tanya Kevorkian, “Changing Times, Changing Music: ‘New Church’ Music and Musicians in Leipzig, 1699-1750,” in *The Musician as Entrepreneur, 1700-1914: Managers, Charlatans, and Idealists*, ed. William Weber (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 61-80. 73.

<sup>36</sup> Francis Bacon quoted by Marcia Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 49

<sup>37</sup> Citron, 49-54.

Gritton’s PhD Thesis also refers to Kant and Hegel for their depiction of similar dualisms. Kant described the duality between women versus men as “fair” versus “noble” in his *Observations of the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime*, 1771. Hegel’s version is “plant” versus “animal”. He used adjectives like “virtuous”, “nurturing”, “pleasing” to describe feminine passivity, whereas masculine dominance was “intelligent,” “protective,” and “competitive.” Bonnie Powelson Gritton, “The Pedagogy of Friedrich Wieck” (Ph.D. thesis, University of California Los Angeles, 1998), 18-20

were often received favorably as re-creating pianists. In addition, the elimination of the creative act of improvisation and extemporization from piano performance strengthened their positions as innocent and unknowing conduit to already composed music. For the pianists that belonged to this group, memorization sometimes served as an indicator to their preconceived lack of ability or awareness. An example can be found in an anecdote from Paris in 1778, when Mozart met a harpist, a daughter of a certain nobleman, Duc de Guines. In describing her to his father, Mozart states how “she [plays] the Harp magnificently; she has a great deal of Talent, and genius, and in particular an incomparable memory, for she plays all her pieces by heart – 200 of them, in fact.”<sup>38</sup> Mozart follows by describing his composition lessons to her. She apparently understood the Rules of Composition and part writing “tolerably” well, although she soon got bored. As for ideas, she had “none at all.”<sup>39</sup>

Despite Mozart’s special mention of memory in the case of the harpist, memories were often taken for granted for these exotic pianists, perhaps because musical literacy would have seemed contradictory to their “natural” abilities. This seems to have been especially the case for child prodigies. They were considered supernatural. The instigator of the phenomenon, the then nine-year-old Mozart became “an object of scientific scrutiny by Daines Barrington, a Fellow of the Royal Society, who later sent in an official report to its Secretary.”<sup>40</sup> The report described Mozart clearing all tasks, given as tests by Barrington, with flying colors: sight-reading an orchestra score while singing the parts he

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<sup>38</sup> Weiss and Taruskin, 310.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 310-311.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 307.

could not cover on the keyboard, improvising songs of various sentiments, his composition and performance of a sonata, and part-writing at sight. However, accounts relating to musical memory are absent. Following Mozart, child prodigies hatched “like larvae everywhere in Europe during the last third of the eighteenth century.”<sup>41</sup>

The other “noble savages” were ethnic others. Alan Walker suggests that one of the influences that encouraged Liszt’s improvisations and memorized performance was his “most colorful childhood memories” of Gypsies and their music. What Liszt admired in Gypsy music was its improvisatory, impulsive nature. It coincided with his own view of the art as something fundamental to mankind. Here was a living proof, for him, that music was truly innate.<sup>42</sup> It inspired Liszt that “without the benefit of conservatory teaching, music sprang up spontaneously within him and gushed forth like a fountain. The typical Gypsy could not even read music notation; yet his repertoire was all-embracing. He seemed to possess total musical recall.”<sup>43</sup> Perhaps through his memorization and improvisation, Liszt was aspiring to the same spontaneous expression of innate musicality he saw in Gypsy performance.

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<sup>41</sup> Paul Metzner, *The Crescendo of the Virtuoso: Spectacle, Skill, and Self-Promotion in Paris during the Age of Revolution* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 123.

<sup>42</sup> Walker, 62. In Paris, during the 1820s, “the young Larsonneur, the infant Leontine Fay, Anne de Belleville, the thirteen-year-old singer Euphémie Boye and the English child pianist George Aspull, had been adulated by the public and duly celebrated by the press.”

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 339-340. His admiration went to such an extent that at one point, he basically adopted a twelve-year-old Gypsy violinist “Josi” Sarai, to see if a Gypsy musician could be formally educated—he could not. The boy was returned to his family. To the twenty-eight-year-old Josi, Liszt wrote “I could almost envy you for having escaped from the civilized art of music making, with its limitations and constrictions...As a Gypsy you remain lord of yourself, and are not reduced (as is now the case with civilized artists) to ask other people for forgiveness when you are only doing right.”

Pianists with physical impairments were also considered as Others in the tradition of Western music.<sup>44</sup> In the case of blind instrumentalists, we can be sure that the score was not used in their performance. After the example of Maria Theresia von Paradis, Louis Braille (1809-1852), emerged as a blind organist and cellist of considerable accomplishment. He developed a system of tactile musical notation for the blind just as he did for letters. Perhaps this inspired the increasing number of blind pianists later in the nineteenth century. For example, Josef Labor (1842-1924), Edward Baxter Perry (1855-1924), and Alfred Hollins (1865-1942) all achieved major fame and honors in their musical careers. Josef Labor possessed “so surprising a musical memory that, in order to play the longest composition correctly, he only requires to hear it once played by his sister, who, likewise, is an accomplished pianist.”<sup>45</sup> Alfred Hollins memorized all major organ works before he turned fifteen, and played works by Mendelssohn and Schumann with orchestras as a teenager.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Gritton, 12. There were keyboardists with physical impairments, besides blindness, as possible examples of “noble savages” that might have been considered to have special access to the “natural” insights to musical workings by their contemporaries. Johann Peter Milchmeyer (1750-1813) was a paraplegic who was named a *Hofmechanikus* to the elector of Bavaria because he invented a specially constructed piano. He was also an author to a piano method (1797) and an editor of a collection of piano works, and a teacher well known for his tone quality and interpretation. He became the only formal piano teacher Friedrich Wieck had.

In addition, German-born Danish composer-pianist, Friedrich Kuhlau (1786-1832) had lost his right eye at the age of seven.

<sup>45</sup> “[Josef Labor] is said to possess so surprising a musical memory that, in order to play the longest composition correctly, he only requires to hear it once played by his sister, who, likewise, is an accomplished pianist. For a night of concert he performed Beethoven Trio in D Major, Beethoven’s Sonata op. 10-3, Schubert’s Impromptu in C Minor, Schumann’s “Ende vom Lied” and Bach Prelude and Fugue.” “Music and the Drama in Vienna,” *The Musical World*, January 11, 1868, 21.

<sup>46</sup> Ian Carson. "Hollins, Alfred." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/42802> [accessed, December 20, 2016.]

Hans von Bülow visited the Musical Academy of the Blind in Birmingham, England on 1878. Aside from an amusing account by Bülow of “conducting” an eighty-piece orchestra made up of blind musicians (except for the concertmaster), he observed and reported on the students he met and heard at the academy, whom he called “happy-unfortunates who never have their attention optically diverted from acoustic matters.”<sup>47</sup> He commented on how the more advanced students were able to sight-sing a piece from a notation read by touch, with “artistic perfection.”<sup>48</sup> However, again, there is no mention of memory, despite the fact that everything played by them on their instruments – including the orchestral parts – must have been from memory for one cannot hold an instrument and read brail at the same time.<sup>49</sup> Application of memory in musical performance is something that is always inherent. The variables are the extent to which it is isolated as a practice and its importance as a performance practice, which can be gleaned from the extent to which it is discussed. Bülow’s neglect in mentioning the musical memory displayed by the blind musicians in 1878 is only an addition to the other mentions of musical memory, or lack thereof.

An additional case of Thomas Greene Bethune (1849-1908), better known as “blind Tom,” emphasizes how musical memory was long dismissed as a natural part of music making. Blind Tom was an example of a cultural “other” in many ways: born blind as an African-American slave, he was an autistic savant. He started mimicking sounds he

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<sup>47</sup> Hans von Bülow. “Autocritical Notes of a Journey in a Fog I: Birmingham, 26<sup>th</sup> November, 1878,” *The Musical World*, December 21, 1878, 821-22.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 821.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 821.



heard as an infant. He surprised everyone by playing the piano suddenly at an early age at his master's house, without any instructions but only having heard the master's daughters practicing. He displayed phenomenal retentive abilities, but Tom did not understand the sounds he reproduced. At the age of four, he "could repeat conversations ten minutes in length, but could only express his needs in whines and tugs."<sup>50</sup> By the age of six, he began touring as an "untutored" and "natural" musician who could repeat any piece of music after a single hearing. His show consisted of playing the piano but also mimicking any sounds: thunders, speeches of presidential candidates from elections years past, and other pianists' performances. There are audience members' accounts of Tom coming out on the stage and introducing himself to the audience by mimicking the doctors that diagnosed his seeming limitation for his mental capacities.<sup>51</sup>

Reports about Tom, and reviews of his shows, from his tours in the U.S. and Europe, often reveal the pervasive contemporary social prejudice not just against Tom but to people around him. A short biography of Tom that appeared in *Atlantic Monthly* in 1862 described a dramatic scene of Tom's first display of his ability at the piano as follows:

There was hardly a conception, however, in the minds of those who heard him of how deep the cause of wonder lay. The planter's wives and daughters of the neighborhood were not people who could be apt to comprehend music as a science, or to use it as a language; they only saw in the little negro,

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<sup>50</sup> Deirdre O'Connell "Who was Blind Tom?" [http://www.blindtom.org/who\\_was\\_blind\\_tom.html](http://www.blindtom.org/who_was_blind_tom.html) [accessed January 21, 2017]

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

therefore, a remarkable facility for repeating the airs they drummed on their pianos.<sup>52</sup>

And there were many wives and daughters, like the women described in the quote, that “drummed on their pianos” music they would, supposedly, not understand. Who would care then, if they read from the score or played from memory; both would be deemed miracles of nature. For those with preconceived notions about them, neither their literacy or memory would signify the noble savages’ cerebral ability or comprehension.

#### 4. Friedrich Wieck’s Pedagogy: Raising Clara the Prodigy

Clara Wieck-Schumann’s lifetime achievements that impacted the canon formation, and the establishment of piano performance practice cannot be overstated, especially considering the social biases against her as a woman, and at the onset of her career, a child. The extent of her influence on the course of music history and our current piano performance practice is inestimable. She was one of the first pianists to widely perform Chopin’s piano music. As an esteemed interpreter of, and also a widow to, Robert Schumann she became the embodiment of the ideal of *Werktreue*, an attitude of interpretation dedicated solely to realizing the composer’s true intent. Her career started with her debut as a child prodigy in 1828 until her last concert in 1891, covering much of the nineteenth century. Her career was one of the best documented from this era. She became the woman on 100 Deutschmark banknotes. The contemporary consensus grants Clara and Liszt the historical first pianists to perform publicly from memory. Because of

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<sup>52</sup> "Blind Tom (From the Atlantic Monthly) [Blind negro pianist]." *Dwight's Journal Of Music*, November 8, 1862: 250-252. *RIPM - Retrospective Index to Music Periodicals*, EBSCOhost [accessed January 21, 2017].

the extent of her influence on the establishment of our current performance practice including memorization, her education and career will be examined as an example throughout the course of this thesis.

Clara's initial development as a prodigy was not her accomplishment alone, but also her father's. Friedrich Wieck (1785-1873) oversaw all of his daughter's musical education. He became a renowned piano and vocal pedagogue and a writer on music and pedagogy, but his beginning was humble. He was mostly self-taught in music, despite his passion for it early on in his life. He studied theology at University of Wittenberg, graduating with merit on 1808. Because clergymen were often responsible for the local education system, studying theology meant studying educational theories of the time.<sup>53</sup> This was an advantage that Wieck had in developing his music pedagogy. Other piano pedagogues of his generation tended to have studied music exclusively. The uniquely holistic pedagogical method Wieck devised became immensely successful. According to Bonnie Powelson Gritton's PhD thesis on Wieck's pedagogical methods, Wieck had three major influences in developing his methodology: Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) and his *Émile, or Treatise on Education* (1762); Rousseau's follower, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827) with the motto "learning by head, hand and heart", whose early childhood educational method was later incorporated in the Prussian school system; and Pestalozzi's follower Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776-1841), who emphasized the importance of education not as a procurement of knowledge, but for the students' morality.<sup>54</sup> Having studied the most advanced pedagogical theories available at

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<sup>53</sup> Gritton, 57.

<sup>54</sup> Gritton also explores Hegel's influence on Wieck's aesthetics and general philosophy.

the time, Wieck devised a method that emphasized sensory experience before intellectual understanding and that catered to each child's personal needs and assets with the aim of holistically educating a moral individual. It proved successful especially with the three women in his family: Clara's mother Marianne Tromlitz (1797-1872) was a successful singer and pianist performing many times at the Gewandhaus; and Marie Wieck (1832-1916), Clara's half-sister, became an established pianist, making her debut at the Gewandhaus in 1845.<sup>55</sup> Ultimately, however, it was Clara's success that brought attention to Wieck's pedagogy. In fact, Friedrich Wieck was to become the only nineteenth-century musical pedagogue to write extensively about the mechanics of learning, placing methodology on an equal footing with its content.<sup>56</sup>

Friedrich was instrumental in cultivating more reliable musical memory in Clara. He did not teach Clara to read music during her first two years of instruction, though she did learn to write notes.<sup>57</sup> As she gained her famous ease with the keyboard through small

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<sup>55</sup> Gritton, 6.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 58-59. Like Rousseau's *Émile*, an orphan who owed obedience to his tutor, five-year-old Clara's custody was won by Wieck after a battle at the court with her mother. This allowed him to pursue the full extent of his pedagogical theories in Clara's education. Her lessons began as soon as Wieck won her custody when Clara was five years old.

<sup>57</sup> "this young lady, whom in another article we have placed among the distinguished pianist of the day was taught by a method so unusual, that we think a short account of it cannot but be interesting to our readers. It differed in all respects from the common methods of instruction, and in some particulars it was wholly novel. Her musical instruction began at the age of five years, and was continued for nearly two years on the instrument alone, without the use of notes. She was first taught the keys, and the fundamental chords in all of them; and she then practiced the scale in all the varieties of the keys, and in all directions. She next learned to play by heart, with correctness and perfection, more than two hundred little exercises, which were composed expressly for her; and she also learned to transpose them with facility into all the different keys. In this manner she acquired complete mastery of the mechanical part of playing, and also a good ear and good time. It was not until she had accomplished all this, and in her seventh year, that she was made acquainted with the notes; which, thus prepared, she of course found an easy task, and soon learned to read music. She now passed directly by all the usual elementary exercises, and took up studies by Clementi, Cramer, Moscheles and the Sonatas of Mozart, the easiest and most comprehensible ones of Beethoven, and such other compositions, as would have a tendency on the one hand to give a deeper and more serious tone to the mind and the imagination, and on the other, to promote a good, natural and regular mode of fingering." "Clara Wieck [Biographical sketch of the prodigy pianist and composer]." *The Musical*

pieces written expressly for her training by her father, the training increased in rigor. She was taught scales, harmonic progression, improvisation and memorization by ear before she learned to read music.<sup>58</sup> Without musical literacy, through oral transmission, reliance on memory becomes a matter of course. Her father took a holistic approach to her education and, unlike the other contemporary famous pedagogues like Czerny, Hummel and Kullak, interrelated theory, technique and performance practice.<sup>59</sup> He considered “taste” to be built on intellectual understanding, aesthetical appreciation and moral character.<sup>60</sup> Finally, he considered that “active exercise, in all weather, makes strong, enduring piano fingers, while subsisting on indoor-air results in sickly nervous, feeble, overstrained playing”<sup>61</sup> limiting Clara’s practice to no more than three hours a day. Contemporary medical experts, commending Wieck’s insight, would call this “‘mild endurance training’ ...pedagogic principles which can help to develop great resilience and an accelerated rate of learning,”<sup>62</sup> helping, most likely, her memory as well.

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*Magazine; Or, Repository Of Musical Science, Literature, And Intelligence* I, February 16, 1839, 61-62. *RIPM - Retrospective Index to Music Periodicals*, EBSCOhost [accessed November 27, 2015]

<sup>58</sup> Reich, 44. “Small pieces, written expressly for her, encouraged her to concentrate on position, musical phrasing, and a ‘singing tone’, and provided a familiarity with the keyboard which accounted for the facility and ease she kept to the end of her life. At the age of seven she was at the piano for three hours a day – one hour for a lesson and two for practice.”

<sup>59</sup> Gritton, 7.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 156-157.

<sup>61</sup> Friedrich Wieck, *Piano and Song: How to Teach, How to Learn, and How to Form a Judgment of Musical Performances*, trans. Mary P. Nichols (Boston: Lockwood, Brooks, 1875), 135-136.

<sup>62</sup> Eckart Altenmüller and Reinhard Kopiez, “Suffering for Her Art: The Chronic Pain Syndrome of Pianist Clara Wieck-Schumann,” ed. Bogouslavsky J, Hennerici MG, and Mazner H. Bassetti C. *Neurological Disorders in Famous Artists – Part 3, Front Neurol Neurosci*, 27 (2010): 105. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20375525> [accessed, March 12, 2017]

Clara's very first letter in her life was to her mother, right after her eighth birthday. It mentions her playing Mozart's E-flat major concerto with an ensemble consisting of her father's friends. She reports how she played "very well and I never stuck at all, only my cadenza would not go easily, where I had to play a chromatic scale three times."<sup>63</sup> Her phrase "I never stuck at all" might suggest that she played the concerto from memory which would make this letter the first record of her memorized performance of a notated piece. Her mention of having "had to play a chromatic scale three times" in her cadenza probably meant that she had improvised it. Clara's first appearance at the Gewandhaus was on October 20, 1828 in a duet, Kalkbrenner's Variations on a March from *Moses*, with another student of her father's. In March and April of 1830 Clara and her father performed in different private settings and became popular instantly. She had her first solo concert at the Gewandhaus on November 8, 1830 to critical acclaim. The father and the daughter started touring extensively soon after.<sup>64</sup> From the details of her upbringing, one may deduce that Clara would have been even more confident in her musical memory than in her musical literacy, and all or most of her performances were given from memory. Nancy Reich states "Under Wieck's thorough tutelage, Clara had learned to memorize as a child, and she never found it to be a problem. Reviewers commented on this feat when she was only thirteen, an indication of how exceptional this practice was."<sup>65</sup> However, if the practice was so exceptional, it could have been mentioned earlier,

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<sup>63</sup> Clara Wieck's letter to her mother written on September 14, 1827, quoted in Berthold Litzmann, *Clara Schumann: An Artist's Life – Based on Material Found in Diaries and Letters*, vol. 1 trans. Grace E. Hadow (London: McMillan & Co., 1918), 9.

<sup>64</sup> Reich, 45-49.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 280.

in reviews for public performances she gave earlier. I propose an opposing possibility, that perhaps because the practice was not so exceptional, it was not mentioned until she was thirteen.

With the rise of non-composing pianists who belonged to the socially marginalized groups of Others, the tension between the obligation to fidelity to the score and the desire for liberation in musical beauty found a nice compromise. The Others were perceived by the general public as unknowing and without the awareness to aspire to creativity, yet so freely happy to be conduits to the musical beauty.

## 5. Innate Music: Natural Pleasure

The possibility that the public performance without the use of the score might have been such a frequent occurrence that it did not warrant any mention or record becomes stronger, especially when one considers the popularity of Rousseau's notion: sensory experience before intellectual understanding. It extended its influence beyond Wieck's pedagogy to general experience of, and expectation for, music. The notion that musical experience should come naturally from within promoted natural musicians and music making. Musicians like Telemann and Paganini insisted that they were self-made and self-taught and that music came effortlessly for them.<sup>66</sup> Schubert's first teacher, Wenzel Ruzicka, gave him up to Salieri proclaiming that "the boy knows everything

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<sup>66</sup> "Telemann emphasized in his autobiography of 1729 that he was an autodidact, with only two weeks of formal instruction on the clavier. Otherwise, 'nature' was his teacher as he composed his first opera at the age of eleven or twelve, and even earlier composed and performed church music in and around Magdeburg. The trope of naturalness was of course to become a theoretical position of enlightened thinking. While it was early days for that movement, Telemann looked ahead significantly to the empiricism of musical thinking later in the eighteenth century." Kevorkian, 73.

already; he has been taught by God.”<sup>67</sup> Czerny kept using the word “natural” in describing Liszt’s talent as a young boy.

The philosophical, social, and legal transformations that Europe was undergoing had direct influence on all areas of music making: musical style, concert format, and music industry. The ideal of social equality entitled all members of the audience to be presented with music that they can effortlessly enjoy. This was regardless of their backgrounds or level of education or understanding. William Weber, in his *Great Transformation of Musical Tastes: Concert Programming from Haydn to Brahms*, describes how there was no clear aesthetical hierarchy between different types of music until the end of the eighteenth century. “German aestheticians began distinguishing between the *Kenner* (learned listener) and the *Liebhaber* (music-lover)” around the middle of the eighteenth century. However, *Kenner* were not considered superior or more desirable to the *Liebhaber*. “The *Liebhaber* possessed a ‘natural’ listening, ‘a compulsive, unthinking attention mixed with astonishment.’ By contrast, the *Kenner*’s listening [was] ‘accompanied by reflection’ and therefore becoming ‘arbitrary,’ tending toward the egotistical because it ‘draws all our attention to itself’.”<sup>68</sup> Audience members felt entitled to their opinions and expressed them accordingly. Mozart complained repeatedly that no one listened to his music – but “few persons did listen attentively to his or anyone else’s music.”<sup>69</sup> The “audience” conversed over, danced to, and shouted at the music, and

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<sup>67</sup> Walker, 73.

<sup>68</sup> William Weber, *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste: Concert Programming from Haydn to Brahms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 27.

<sup>69</sup> Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 192.



applauded whenever they felt like it. Liszt was interrupted in the middle of his “Kreutzer” Sonata performance, as well as right before the ‘Emperor’ Concerto by the repetitive cries of “Robert le Diable!” Each time, he complied and played his *Réminiscences de Robert le Diable*, based on Meyerbeer’s opera.<sup>70</sup> There is no account of Liszt going backstage in order to retrieve the score to comply with the audience’s request. The piece was so popular to be requested by its title. Liszt must have played it numerous times until he had probably memorized it.

Performers were equally casual about performing for such crowds. The idea of “rehearsing” is a new concept, according to Lydia Goehr. The German terms for rehearsal were used interchangeably with terms designated for performance earlier, and came to signify a semi-public play-through in the eighteenth century.<sup>71</sup> Bored orchestra members conversed amongst themselves during performances.<sup>72</sup> Performances were often interrupted because the audience would get bored or because performers made enough mistakes to warrant a “take two.”<sup>73</sup> Concerts were an occasion for socialization, not a ritual of music worship. Liszt socialized with his audience during his performance. He would appear “well before the start of the concert and mingle with the public, speaking and conversing with everyone, leading the ladies to their seats, creating space

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<sup>70</sup> Kenneth Hamilton, “The Virtuoso Tradition,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Piano*, ed. David Rowland (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 65.

<sup>71</sup> Goehr, 193.

<sup>72</sup> Robert Ricks “Are Our Audiences ‘Skeered to Clap’?: A Brief Survey of Applause Practices,” *Journal of the Conductor’s Guild* 16, no. 2 (1995): 68.

<sup>73</sup> Goehr, 191.

and order, is here, then there, and generally makes himself the host of the hall.”<sup>74</sup>

Paganini sold tickets at the box office during the intermission (but, at a discount).<sup>75</sup> When the music was not yet serious, and concerts not yet ritualized, the stakes were much lower for the performers. Perhaps memorization back then was not unlike memorization any pianist would find herself to have accomplished in the course of learning a piece: one day she would happen to forget to turn a page, surprising herself with her own ability to go on without interruption.

The notion of music as something that was innately natural and human worked well with the new music industry in the free market economy. With the increasing popularity of public concerts and thriving publishing industry in the late eighteenth century, it helped propagate the musical style that was simple in texture, formulaic in harmony and structure, and therefore easy to memorize and improvise on. Later on, it also fit well with the appreciation of simplicity in the *Biedermeier* culture.<sup>76</sup> The promotion of social equality and natural engagements with music encouraged commercialism and populism in the music industry. It endorsed musical naïveté in its consumers. Leopold Mozart wrote to his son “I recommend you to think when at work not only of the musical but also of the unmusical public. You know that for ten true

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<sup>74</sup> Christopher H. Gibbs, “‘Just Two Words. Enormous Success’: Liszt’s 1838 Vienna Concerts,” *Franz Liszt and His World*, ed. Christopher H. Gibbs and Dana Gooley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 204.

<sup>75</sup> Mai Kawabata, *Paganini: The ‘Demonic’ Virtuoso* (Suffolk, UK: The Boydell Press, 2013), 79.

<sup>76</sup> Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, trans. J. Bradford Robinson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 396. “*Biedermeier*” is defined in his Glossary of terms. “Style of the Restoration period from 1814 to 1848. Unlike romantic music of the time, it was noted for its fondness for simplicity and a strict dependence on bourgeois institutions: domestic music-making, choral groups (*Liedertafeln*), oratorio societies (*Singakademien*).” Also refer to his section “Romanticism and *Biedermeier* Music,” 168-178.

connoisseurs there are hundred ignoramuses! Do not neglect the so-called popular.”<sup>77</sup>

Two years earlier Leopold defined the “popular” specifically as pieces simple enough for amateurs to perform. “Let your name be known!” he urged, “Let it be something short, easy and popular.”<sup>78</sup> It was not just the composers worrying about their audiences. It was also the publishing industry pushing composers in that direction. Madame Pleyel wrote to her husband, Mozart’s contemporary composer, Ignaz Pleyel (1757-1831); “We will do far better to print all sorts of small works every day, which require no great advances and on which the return is sure.”<sup>79</sup> Small compositions composed to be short, easy and popular, would have been easy to memorize.

Because the style of music was easy to memorize, and the concerts were so casual, it was not an act that would be considered worthy of mention or record. At this point, the audience’s appreciation and pleasure were of the most importance: not the music or how it was presented. In addition, memorization may have been categorized under the same bracket as improvisation, which was an important part of a concert at this point. It was a way to make a concert more interactive with the audience. Improvising a prelude that led into the programmed piece, allowed the performer not only to display his/her improvisational skills but also to set the mood while testing the instrument.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Leopold Mozart to his son, 11 December 1780, *Letters of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart*, trans. M.M. Bozman, ed. Hans Mersmann (New York: Dover, 1972), 149.

<sup>78</sup> Leopold Mozart to his son, 13 August 1778 quoted in Mersmann, 120.

<sup>79</sup> Madam Pleyel’s letter to Ignaz Pleyel quoted in Gottfried Müller, *Daniel Steibelt, sein Leben und seine Klavierwerke: Etüden und Sonaten* (Leipzig, Publisher Unknown: 1933), 92. Quoted in David Rowland “The Music of the Early Pianists (to c. 1830)” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Piano*, ed. David Rowland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 137.

<sup>80</sup> Czerny, *A Systematic Introduction to Improvisation on the Pianoforte*, 6.

Clara Schumann would program a set of short pieces in different styles by different composers by interweaving them with her improvised preludes inserted in between. An example can be found in a review from a concert on April in Berlin, where “directly following one after the other and introduced through short preludes, taken from the themes of the solo pieces: Fugue in E Major by J. S. Bach; *Lied ohne Worte* by F. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy; Mazurka (F-sharp Minor) and Arpeggio-Etude no. 11 by Chopin.”<sup>81</sup> Liszt often took themes from his audience members to improvise free fantasies.<sup>82</sup> Improvisation as an expected part of a concert meant that the audience would have been used to not seeing a printed score in front of a pianist. In the culture of *Liebehaber* with the appreciation of innate musicality and simplicity, effortless execution of fluid beauty was more valuable than learned mastery of difficulty. Elimination of the score would have helped with the image of effortless fluidity.

It was customary, starting around the 1780s, for the soloist to alternate with a group of “supporting” artists – singers, instrumentalists, a small ensemble, and even comedians, lecturers, and a theatrical troupe, etc. Often called “miscellanies,” such concerts featured variety of genres from opera arias, overture, symphony, concerto, instrumental solo, and possibly a string quartet or a song.<sup>83</sup> Referring to the etymology of the word “concert,” Weber states that “by definition, a concert brought together a variety

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<sup>81</sup> *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (1837) 39: 257. Quoted in David Ferris, “Public Performance and Private Understanding: Clara Wieck’s Concerts in Berlin,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 56 no. 2 (Summer 2003), 385.

<sup>82</sup> “In order to enliven my concerts a little bit, which were reproached with being always too serious, I had the idea of offering to improvise on themes proposed by the music lovers and chosen by acclamation.” Metzner, 146.

Another account of Liszt’s improvisation on Weber’s *Imitation to the Waltz* in Vienna from the year 1848 can be found in Gibbs, “Just Two Words. Enormous Success,” 201.

<sup>83</sup> Weber, *The Great Transformation*, 1.

of musicians; it was out of the question for one musician to perform alone.”<sup>84</sup>

Memorizing the fewer solo pieces that she would perform would be far less daunting than it would be to memorize a program for a full recital. The repertoire of the time, under the aesthetic of musical empiricism and homophony in a musical culture dominated by operas, was also more accessible to the mass, and more easily memorized by the performers.

The founding document of the Gewandhaus included the order of musical genres expected at concerts, which William Weber refers to as the standard format that majority of concert programs adhered to until the 1830s. The only featured solo by the instrumentalist that would possibly be memorized in this format is the concerto. That would be very little music to memorize, and easier still if it were composed by the performer himself or herself. In addition, at this point in the history of performance practice, pieces were not presented in its entirety, but only one or two selected movements.

Overture or Symphony  
Opera number, usually an aria  
Concerto, done by the principal player, often composed by that person  
Opera ensemble number, duo to sextet

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Overture or Symphony  
Opera aria or ensemble number  
Operatic choral number  
Symphony or other instrumental piece<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Weber, *The Great Transformation*, 15.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

Here is an example of a program loosely following the format from London on May 29, 1795 the way it was announced in *The Morning Post* on May 27<sup>th</sup>. It featured Dussek as the soloist, and Haydn as the “director” during Haydn’s second visit to London.

Part I

Overture, Dr. Haydn, under his direction  
 Concerto, Oboe, Mr. Harrington  
 Song, Mrs. N. Corri (being her first appearance)  
 Concerto Piano Forte, Mr. Dussek  
 The Grand March of Alceste, arranged as a Glee, by Mr. Dussek

Part II

Grand Overture, Haydn  
 Song, Madame Dussek  
 Concerto Violin, Mr. Giornovich  
 Song, Handel, Mr. Nield  
 Concerto, Harp, Madame Dussek  
 Finale<sup>86</sup>

As one of the first entrepreneurial touring virtuosos who was often noted for his performance from memory, Paganini’s program around 1828 is worthy of attention at this point. He almost exclusively performed his own compositions, and his core repertoire consisted of about twenty pieces. With the miscellaneous concert format, he was responsible only for three offerings per concert. They usually consisted of “one of his concertos, one of his G-string pieces, and a set of variations on a theme from an opera, a ballet or other large works.”<sup>87</sup> It would be unnatural for him not to be able to play from memory, if his repertoire consisted only of twenty pieces that he wrote himself. Moreover, his pieces were technically virtuosic but musically uncomplicated. His compositional style belonged more to the formulaic classical era than the Romantic

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<sup>86</sup> Rowland, “The Music of the Early Pianists (to c. 1830),” 135-136.

<sup>87</sup> Metzner, 127.

period that was to come. In addition, he was infamous for the number of concerts he played in one city “until the trough was exhausted.”<sup>88</sup> Whether the memorization came naturally or easily, however, Paganini’s memorization symbolized his freedom in his music making, as well as in his persona, and enhanced the spectacle of his virtuosity. This aspect of his virtuosity will be explored further in the next chapter as an inspiration to Liszt.

In the culture of appreciating innate musicality, performers performed pieces that came naturally to them. Most instrumentalists played their own piece, along with pieces by their contemporaries’. Performing one’s own composition would have been symbolic of their innate voice, not too unlike improvisation. It would also have been easier to memorize. Even compositions by other contemporaries would be easier than playing pieces from different historical periods because of the shared style. And the contemporary style of music happened to be simple with melody-dominated homophony and formulaic harmony and structure.

Memory is an inherent aspect of any musical engagement. Examples of performers and performances surveyed through this chapter suggest that memorization in the classical and early romantic periods played a very different role than in the performance culture of classical music today. As in the case of Mozart, sometimes playing from memory was for practical convenience, or for protection of copyrights. Clara and Blind Tom learned to play by ear. Many musicians memorized without being required to do so,

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<sup>88</sup> “Paganini milked the market for all it was worth, with endless repeat performances... (“the last,” “the very last,” “the absolutely last”) until the trough was exhausted.” Simon McVeigh, ““An Audience for High-Class Music’: Concert Promoters and Entrepreneurs in Late-Nineteenth-Century London,” in *The Musicians as Entrepreneur, 1700-1914: Managers, Charlatans, and Idealists*, ed. William Weber (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 173-174.

as in the case of Mozart's harpist, and as children still do today. Before the culture of canonized musical works to be theoretically analyzed and worshipped in ritualized settings, it appears that music was more spontaneous and formulaic, performed more instinctively. At this point in the history of piano performance, sight-reading and improvisation warranted more acknowledgement as a testament to the pianist's pianistic abilities and musical understanding, whereas memorization could be taken for a sign of slavish and blind obedience perhaps to compensate for the lack of creativity. That is why Kalkbrenner became a laughing stock in the anecdote quoted at the opening of this chapter. I will end the chapter with another anecdote that has been told and retold, this one of Kalkbrenner's eight-year-old son, who stops in the middle of his improvisation in front of the French king, confessing to his father: "Papa, I have forgotten."<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> "Kalkbrenner had a son whom he hoped to make the inheritor of his glory, but who, after having been an infant prodigy, aborted and became a prodigious nullity. One night after having boasted before the French Court of the improvisation of his child, then eight years old, the king expressed his desire to hear one of these marvelous inspirations. The child placed himself at the piano and played for some minutes, then stopping all at once, he turned towards his father and artlessly said to him, 'Papa, I have forgotten.'" Louis Moreau Gottschalk, Clara Gottschalk Peterson, and R. E. Peterson, *Notes of a Pianist during His Professional Tours in the United States, Canada, the Antilles, and South America: Preceded by a Short Biographical Sketch with Contemporaneous Criticisms* (Philadelphia: Presser, 1881), 297.



## CHAPTER TWO: VIRTUOSIC MEMORY

From April 10 to May 25 of the year 1838, the twenty-six-year-old Franz Liszt was in Vienna. In the course of his seven-week stay, he performed “some fifty pieces by eighteen composers, many of them public premieres, *all apparently from memory*” in six public and six semipublic concerts to extraordinary reception.<sup>90</sup> A fervent review read:

After the concert, he stands there like a conqueror on the field of ballet...; vanquished pianos lie about him, broken strings flutter as trophies and flags of truce, frightened instruments flee in terror into distant corners, the listeners look at each other in mute astonishment as after a storm from a clear sky, as after thunder and lightning mingled with a shower of blossoms and buds and dazzling rainbows; and he the Prometheus, who creates a form from every note.<sup>91</sup>

Many critics considered that Liszt triumphed over Clara Wieck and Sigismond Thalberg (1812-1871), both of whom were in Vienna at the same time. Clara left Vienna after hearing and performing with Liszt, complaining “ever since I heard and saw Liszt’s

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<sup>90</sup> Gibbs, “‘Just Two Words. Enormous Success’,” 201. [emphasis added] Unfortunately, I cannot claim to know what makes it apparent to Dr. Gibbs that Liszt played “*all of his repertoire from memory*.” Furthermore, in his count of “fifty pieces by eighteen composers” Dr. Gibbs seems to have included all the non-solo repertoire on the program in Liszt’s Viennese programs as well, including accompaniment to songs.

Kenneth Hamilton, *After the Golden Age: Romantic Pianism and Modern Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 76. Kenneth Hamilton’s claim is that “Liszt’s central repertoire was rather limited and it was a “far cry from the level usually expected today and hardly deserving of the stunned astonishment of some of his biographers.”

Walker, 256. Walker claims that “Liszt played more than forty compositions in Vienna, all of them from memory, including Beethoven’s *Moonlight* and *Funeral March* Sonatas, and works by Weber, Chopin, Scarlatti, Handel, Moscheles and others.”

Ludwig Rellstab, *Franz Liszt: Beurtheilungen-Berichte-Lebensskizze*. Berlin, 1842, P. 41ff, quoted in Walker, 286. Just for an additional reference in regard to how much of Liszt’s repertoire was played from memory, Walker states that Liszt’s “Berlin recitals of 1841-42...in ten weeks he gave twenty-one concerts and played eighty works – fifty of them from memory” citing Rellstab.

<sup>91</sup> *Humorist* 2, no. 64 (21 April 1838): 254. Quoted in Gibbs, “‘Just Two Words. Enormous Success’,” 200.

bravura, I feel like a beginner.”<sup>92</sup> Critics repeatedly called him an “artist” and credited him with “genius”, comparing him to “powerful Neptune,” “magician,” and “a musical Faust.”<sup>93</sup> Liszt later claimed that the success of this trip “determined [his] path as a virtuoso.”<sup>94</sup> His lasting influence on piano repertoire, concert format, and performer-audience relationship, just through this trip, were possibly even more significant. He played chamber and vocal music, and solo transcriptions and sonatas, introducing yet-to-be-well-known composers such as Scarlatti and Schubert along with Beethoven, Rossini, Berlioz and Weber, offering programs of pieces almost entirely composed by others, improvising only once for an encore.<sup>95</sup> He dispensed with an orchestra, and played on most of the selections. In short, he pulled away from the traditional miscellany programming and pushed towards solo recital format. His charismatic persona awed the audience, and his sociability delighted them.

Just two years later in London, however, he met with a contrastingly cold reception. The historical first “recital,” featuring Liszt as soloist in all pieces for the entire concert, was dismissed as “this curious exhibition” and his playing as an “animal astonishment” and “physical enjoyment.”<sup>96</sup> There was no overt excitement around his

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<sup>92</sup> Gibbs, “‘Just Two Words. Enormous Success’,” 204.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 205, and 200.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 168.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 201.

Walker, 256. “The Scarlatti item aroused interest. Liszt introduced this ‘antique’ composer whom he had discovered in Italy...Other pianists now hastened to find their own ‘old masters,’ and it suddenly became fashionable to include ‘historical pieces’ in concert programs.”

<sup>96</sup> “Liszt’s Pianoforte Recitals,” *Musical World*, No. 220. – New Series, No. CXXVIII. (June 11, 1840): 361, and 367.

innovation of the new concert format or courage and stamina of playing the entire program all by himself. His anonymous critic praised his technique as “putting *music* out of the question, it was little short of a miracle,” but accused him of “prostituting his great powers to the worst of ends,” adding that Liszt’s composition “Galop chromatique” was “the ugliest piece of music.”<sup>97</sup>

Scholars have offered various reasons to explain away the negative reviews of Liszt’s London recital.<sup>98</sup> However, the 1840 London reviews were only a few examples of numerous bad reviews Liszt was to receive in his career as a virtuoso. My purpose here is not to investigate the reasons behind the discrepant receptions Liszt received with similar programs just two years apart, but to pose more general questions about the virtuosity reception. The polarized reception Liszt received has, in fact, been representative of reactions to virtuosos throughout history to this day. Kenneth Hamilton describes a typical view of the virtuosos as “stylistically insensitive, contemptuous of textual fidelity and, to cap it all, too loud,” and observes that even today “some critics seem unable to utter the word ‘virtuosity’ without the appendages ‘empty’ or

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<sup>97</sup> “Liszt’s Pianoforte Recitals,” 361, 364 and 362. [emphasis original]

Michael Aspinall “Mr. Chorley on M. Liszt in London, 1840 and 1841,” *Musical Opinion: Liszt’s Bicentenary, Part. 1* (September-October 2011): 23-26. Henry Fothergill Chorley a music and literary critic for *The Athenaeum* did his best to defend Liszt, but he was also Liszt’s friend.

<sup>98</sup> Walker, 353. In his three-volume biography of Liszt, Alan Walker dismisses the negative reviews in the *Musical World* and *Musical Journal* as not reflective of the general audience reception.

Sacheverell Sitwell, *Liszt*. (London: 1934, rev. New York: Dover, 1967 P. 97) paraphrased by Walker, 354. Walker also refers to Sacheverell Sitwell’s claim that it was Liszt’s relationship with Marie d’Agoult out of wedlock that made the Victorian critics feel obligated to critique him.

Zarko Cvejic, *The Virtuosos as Subject: The Reception of Instrumental Virtuosity, c. 1815-c.1850* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), 42. Cvejic explains that the tour was poorly managed with bad halls and pianos and “other misfortunes.”

‘meretricious’.”<sup>99</sup> In the nineteenth century, the virtuoso reception was especially vehement. Virtuosos were both hailed as demi-Gods and despised as demons. As the spiritual values of serious musical works gradually overshadowed the spectacles of virtuosic piano performance, the anti-virtuosity rhetoric increased. This chapter will examine the virtuosos who used memorization as an integral aspect of virtuosic spectacles. The vehemence in the virtuosity reception in the nineteenth century was partially a reaction to its social context: Industrialization, and evolution and mass production of the instrument, piano. Examining social implications of Industrialization and rise of the piano industry will also shed some light onto the genesis of memorization. Despite the current tendency to disregard the phenomenon of nineteenth-century piano virtuosity as a short-lived and frivolous vogue, some of today’s piano performance practice, including memorization, were founded largely influenced by virtuosos and their historical context.

### 1. Mind over Body: Spiritual Music versus Virtuosity

Many classical pianists today would prefer to think of their memorization as a way to internalize and venerate the canons than to think of it as a spectacle rooted in the actions of nineteenth-century virtuosos. Pianists tend to promote their artistry by disregarding the technical aspects and disassociating themselves from virtuosity. It is a result of nineteenth-century endorsement of the ideal of “serious” music that denigrated virtuosity as antithetical to the notion of “serious” music. In Ancient Greece, the

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<sup>99</sup> Hamilton, “The Virtuoso Tradition,” 57.

technical mastery of an instrument was often contrasted with the conceptual and “true” understanding of music. Boethius (c. 480-524) described practical musicians as “slaves.” In his *De Institutione Musica*, transmitting the ancient philosophy on music from the Greeks, he described instrumental players as: “...the type which buries itself in instruments is separated from the understanding of musical knowledge. ...[For] example kithara players and organists and other instrumentalists, devote their total effort to exhibiting their skill on instruments. Thus they act as slaves... for they use no reason, but are totally lacking in thought.”<sup>100</sup>

Instrumental virtuosity is a display of the most physical aspect of music making, and the concept of the corporeal conflicts with the ideals of music. Bodies represent actual needs for sustenance and reproduction, making men vulnerable to seduction of material wealth and sex. On the other hand, highbrow music has been idealized since Ancient Greece as a way to transcend such corporeal needs and weaknesses. That ideal ignores the music’s inherent need for realization by the physical act of performing. Virtuosos were penalized for this contradiction. Anti-virtuosity rhetoric emerged as a consequence, criticizing virtuosos for their displays of physical abilities, and for the subsequent material rewards. Educators and intellectuals have issued warnings against these instrumentalists as socially and morally corrupt, comparing their shows to circus acts, sexual displays and freak shows. On the other hand, precisely because of their immediately recognizable extraordinary skills, virtuosos also had popular appeal. Their abilities seemed to defy physical and temporal restrictions, and rules of nature. Virtuosos

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<sup>100</sup> Calvin M. Bower, *Boethius’ The Principles of Music: An Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Ph.D. diss., George Peabody College for Teachers, 1966), 101-104. Quoted in Weiss and Taruskin, 37.

displayed their reign over their own bodies and destinies, successfully navigating through the society with its shifting values. The virtuosos' apparent autonomy from social conventions and natural orders were further enhanced when their performances were done without the use of the score, emphasizing their freedom.

While contentions surrounding the bodily practice of playing musical instruments have a long history, the word “virtuoso” did not appear in the Italian language until the sixteenth or seventeenth century. Its original root is in the Latin word *virtus*, meaning “power” and “strength”. The Italian word *virtù* does not relate to the English word ‘virtuous’ and “has little to do with observing a moral code.”<sup>101</sup> It was designated for a person of extraordinary intellectual or artistic accomplishment.<sup>102</sup> In the field of music at this point in time, his compositional skill and theoretical knowledge would have earned him the honor of being called a “virtuoso” more than his skill as a performer. When the term came to be used internationally at the beginning of the eighteenth century, Johann Mattheson, in his *Der brauchbare Virtuoso* (1720) distinguished the two disciplines of music making as both virtuosic. While honoring the traditional ‘*Theoretische Virtuosen*,’ he also paid tribute to the ‘*virtuosi pratici*,’ a practical virtuoso.<sup>103</sup> With the increasing popularity of opera and the instrumental concerto, the term came to refer more to the soloists. By 1840 an article titled “Virtuoso” would define virtuosity as “[the] perfect

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<sup>101</sup> Kawabata, 77. “[Its] original meaning is preserved in English usage ‘by virtue of the power vested in me’” in the sense of potency or agency.

<sup>102</sup> Owen Jander, s.v. “Virtuoso.” *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/29502>. [accessed January 26, 2016]

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

execution of a musical composition, or, in one word, the art of the virtuoso, requires generally a peculiar turn of the artist's talent, so much so that the creative genius seldom combines with it in equal energy; and moreover, it requires so much and so persevering practice, that but little time is left for the study of composition."<sup>104</sup> The article now designates the term to non-composing players, who would devote their time to the technical mastery of instrumental playing over studies of composition.

As the use of the term "virtuoso" developed to point to performers, and the separation of labor between the composers and the instrumental virtuosos became more prevalent, the tendency to dissociate the physical ability of musical performance from the cerebral understanding of music became more pronounced. Successful performers often acquired derogatory terms like charlatans and mercenary, and were accused of amoral influences by their critics. The hostility grew in direct proportion to the potential degree of fame and fortune attained by virtuosos with the transforming European social and economic structures and subsequent rise of public concerts. Many were accused of exhibitionism, egocentricity and evil influences. Some were also reputed to have usually fictional physical deformations that allowed their superhuman mastery of musical executions. Two examples from the first generations of these virtuosi, violinist Giuseppe Tartini (1692-1770) and castrato Farinelli (1705-1782) demonstrate my points here. Tartini was primarily a violinist, reputed to have had six fingers that enabled him to execute of his most famous composition, the "Devil's Trill" Sonata. He took up

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<sup>104</sup> "The Virtuoso (Translated from the German) [Performing musicians who acquire a great and prominent proficiency on an instrument or in singing]," *The Musical Magazine: Or, Repository of Musical Science, Literature, and Intelligence* II, no. 42, August 1 1840, 247-249. RIPM - Retrospective Index to Music Periodicals, EBSCOhost [accessed January 26, 2016]

pedagogy, composition and music theory only later in his life. Farinelli achieved legendary fame and fortune and a lasting celebrity through posterity as the historical castrato. Critics accused Farinelli for morally corrupting society by his power to seduce his listeners to indolence and self-indulgence with his unusual gender ambiguity, on-stage charisma, and alluring singing.<sup>105</sup>

In his essay “The Battle Against Instrumental Virtuosity in the Early Nineteenth Century,” Dana Gooley posits that anti-virtuosity rhetoric was an elitist minority opinion with the agenda to promote serious instrumental music by pitting it against the virtuosic genres.<sup>106</sup> It was also a way for the more traditional local musicians to preserve their authority over their townspeople against the travelling virtuosi who had the advantage of novelty over them. Gooley demonstrates how an example of a typical anti-virtuosic rhetoric can be seen from as early as in 1802, when a local musician, Wilhelm Triest, published a lengthy essay, “On Traveling Virtuosos,” in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*.<sup>107</sup> Triest’s essay distinguished two types of virtuosos: the true virtuoso (*wahre Virtuos*), “a musician with a broad range of learning” epitomized in a town’s Capellmeister; and the pseudo-virtuoso (*achte Virtuos*), a merely excellent instrumentalist “who might cobble together a simple Italianate concerto.”<sup>108</sup> His claims against the latter

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<sup>105</sup> Thomas McGeary, “Farinelli and the English: ‘One God’ or the Devil?” *La Revue LISA / LISA e-journal*. Volume II – n°3 / 2004 ISSN 1762-6153, 31.  
[http://www.academia.edu/17475173/Farinelli\\_and\\_the\\_English\\_One\\_God\\_or\\_the\\_Devil](http://www.academia.edu/17475173/Farinelli_and_the_English_One_God_or_the_Devil) [accessed January 22, 201.]

<sup>106</sup> Dana Gooley, “The Battle Against Instrumental Virtuosity in the Early Nineteenth Century,” in *Franz Liszt and His World*, ed. Christopher H. Gibbs and Dana Gooley (Princeton: Princeton University Press. 2006), 75-111.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 82-90.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.



were that, by sheer novelty, traveling pseudo-musicians allured the provincial townsfolk by his one or two concerti under his belt, without any knowledge of music or its virtue. They stole the prestige and money away from the Capellmeister, who had dedicated years of daily efforts for “the furthering of humanity” through teaching music and promoting virtues in his small town. And the pseudo-musicians had corrupting influences on his townsfolk with “immoral characteristics” such as “lack of modesty, strange moodiness, and an addiction to sensual indulgences such as gambling, women, and drink.”<sup>109</sup> Triest’s numerous complaints became widespread as general claims against virtuosos in the decades leading up to Lisztomania in 1841-2: an unprecedented hysterical fan frenzy during Liszt’s concert tour in Berlin.

As can be seen from Triest’s example, musical periodicals gave intellectuals and their opinions publicity and authority. The periodicals were used also to promote the symphony as the *virtuous* instrumental music. Dana Gooley asserts that the “elite class of critics and professional performers” schemed to conceal “values as observations [to ensure] that a preference for serious symphonic works would appear to have emerged spontaneously and naturally – democratically – from the ‘public.’”<sup>110</sup> Their “most effective and concrete strategy...was to profile it against other *instrumental* music – variations, potpourris, fantasies, and concertos,” the virtuosic repertoire.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Wilhelm Triest, “Über reisende Virtuosen: Abhandlung” (On Traveling virtuosos: Essay). *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 4, nos. 46-48 (11, 18, and 25 August 1802). Quoted in Gooley, “The Battle Against Instrumental Virtuosity,” 89.

<sup>110</sup> Gooley, “The Battle Against Instrumental Virtuosity,” 76.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 77. [emphasis original]

Yet, in the face of the defamation campaign against virtuosity, virtuosos thrived. Virtuosos represented a successful and autonomous individual, rising above the transforming world in the midst of the Age of Revolution. Memorization helped enhance this image. Industrialization led to celebration of superhuman virtuosity that seemed to “out-machine the machinery.”<sup>112</sup> Virtuosos were seen as examples of a self-made men who successfully capitalized on skill and knowledge in the age of technocracy.<sup>113</sup> Virtuosos freely expressed their own most personal and intimate feelings in public. They served as models to audiences that were faced with the challenges of negotiating between the newly emerged private and public spheres in rapidly forming urban societies.<sup>114</sup> Instrumental virtuosity in particular thrived because instrumental music’s non-verbal nature allowed the virtuosos to freely express their most intimate thoughts and actions without being targeted by the prevalent censorship that threatened the freedom of the artistic expression in most fields of the arts at the time.<sup>115</sup> Virtuosos seemed to defy, and rise above, the oppressive social rules, conventions, traditions, and transformations. In 1869, Eduard Hanslick deemed 1830-48 as the “virtuoso era” in his history of Viennese concert life. *The Virtuoso as Subject: the Reception of Instrumental Virtuosity, c. 1815-c. 1850* by Zarko Cvejić studies the phenomenon of virtuosity between Napoleon’s final defeat in 1815 to the European-wide revolutions of 1848.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Richard Leppert, “The Musician of the Imagination” *The Musician as Entrepreneur, 1700-1914: Managers, Charlatans and Idealists*, ed. William Weber (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 47.

<sup>113</sup> Metzner, 6.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 272.

<sup>115</sup> Gooley, “The Battle Against Instrumental Virtuosity,” 205.

<sup>116</sup> Cvejić, 23.

Paul Metzner, in his *Crescendo of the Virtuoso: Spectacle, Skill, and Self-Promotion in Paris during the Age of Revolution* examines virtuosos of various disciplines between 1775 and 1850 with a special attention to memory as a part of virtuosic spectacle.<sup>117</sup> According to him, virtuosos modified “the exercise of their arts to make them more striking to the eye or ear – that is, more spectacular. They performed often, with rapidity, and *from memory*.”<sup>118</sup> Memorization as a part of the virtuosic spectacle enhanced the sense of the virtuosos’ social autonomy and defiance.<sup>119</sup> Metzner’s book studies virtuosos of diverse disciplines, including chess playing, crime detection, and magic shows. He demonstrates a common thread in the aspect of memory

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<sup>117</sup> Metzner, 1.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 1-2. [emphasis added]

<sup>119</sup> Unfortunately however, Metzner’s association between virtuosity and memorization is unverifiable. More important articles on the topic of virtuosity that I have read through to search this connection were:

“The Virtuoso (Translated from the German) [Performing musicians who acquire a great and prominent proficiency on an instrument or in singing],” *The Musical Magazine: Or, Repository of Musical Science, Literature, and Intelligence* 2, no. 42 (August 1 1840): 247-249. RIPM - Retrospective Index to Music Periodicals, EBSCOhost [accessed January 26, 2016]

J.C. Lobe. "Virtuosos and virtuosity (From the German of "One Well-known." (Translated for this journal)," *Dwight's Journal of Music* VII, no. 25 (September 22, 1855): 193-194. RIPM - Retrospective Index to Music Periodicals, EBSCOhost (accessed January 22, 2017).

Heinrich Heine. “[Review] Henri Heine about music and musicians (Translated for this Journal) Section II The Piano-forte Virtuosos: (Paris, March 25, 1843) Sivori and Dreyschock; (March 26, 1843) Kalkbrenner, Pixis, Herz, Hallé, Wolf, Heller, Thalberg, Chopin,” *Dwight's Journal of Music* 13, no. 16 (July 17, 1858): 121-122. RIPM - Retrospective Index to Music Periodicals, EBSCOhost [accessed January 22, 2017].

"Biography. Henry Vieuxtemps (Translated from the German) [Among the younger virtuosos of the present time, undoubtedly one of the most prominent],” *The Musical Magazine; or, Repository of Musical Science, Literature, and Intelligence* 2, no. 50 (November 21, 1840): 385-388. RIPM - Retrospective Index to Music Periodicals, EBSCOhost (accessed January 26, 2016).

Alexandre Oulibischeff, “Mozart as a Virtuoso and Improvisator,” *Dwight's Journal of Music* II, no. 23 (March 12, 1853): 177-179.

"Dazzling Virtuosity [Liszt in 1840],” *Dwight's Journal of Music* 5, no. 4 (April 29, 1854): 26-27. RIPM - Retrospective Index to Music Periodicals, EBSCOhost (accessed January 22, 2017).

in these various fields of spectacle-making and describes their dispensing the vision in their acts as “cerebral acrobatics”: chess game played without a chessboard, crime suspects identified without any visual cues, concerts given without notes, and magicians describing an object without any sensory input are some of Metzner’s examples.<sup>120</sup> Metzner’s assertion that memory was an important aspect of virtuosic spectacle in the first half of the nineteenth century will be explored in the following sections. For piano virtuosos, memorization would eventually result in Liszt’s piano recitals in 1840. The word “recital” implies memorized delivery to an audience.

## 2. The Social and Historical Background to the Popularity of Virtuosos

The love-hate relationship that the public had with their virtuosos during the Age of Revolution reflected their renewed sense of self and the world, in the midst of the drastic social transformation. The Age of Revolution is a term that refers to a period with unspecified dates during which Europe went through many upheavals, political and conceptual. The political revolutions started with the American Revolution of 1776-83, followed by the French Revolution of 1789-99. Industrial Revolutions between 1760 and 1840 and subsequent urbanization resulted in exploding concentration of population in urban areas as well as consumer-based market. The intellectual movement preceded all of the above and started with the Enlightenment. When that ended in the bloodbath of the French Revolution, the Romantic Revolution started as a reaction. These revolutions gave individuals more power over government, public space, and their own thoughts and life.

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<sup>120</sup> Metzner, 260. [emphasis added]

Power was no longer something that one had to be born into, but something that one could gain by acquisition of wealth, practical knowledge, special skills, art or craft. The Industrial Revolution and Napoleon's technocracy helped propagate this notion.<sup>121</sup> People felt more entitled to their self-centered world view, and some of the social consequences were anarchical. Materialism, profit-driven amoral business dealings, and idolization of out-law criminals were only some of the manifestations.<sup>122</sup> As Metzner notes "Pornography flourished. The illegitimate-birth rate soared."<sup>123</sup>

The self-centered world view also manifested itself in a clear separation of private and public spheres.<sup>124</sup> In his own private sphere, the individual excluded others, and focused on the cultivation of his exceptionality.<sup>125</sup> In the public sphere, he aggrandized his exceptionality, and sought attention and recognition. This separation created a need for a public figure to demonstrate how to negotiate the two separate spheres. Virtuosos filled this need. The social restructuring also allowed for the musicians to transform into *artists*. Traditionally, under the patronage of a court or a church, musicians were bound by contracts to compose, teach and provide any desired entertainment, all on a regular

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<sup>121</sup> Metzner, 2.

<sup>122</sup> "Widely celebrated real-life outlaw-heroes included Rob Roy (1671-1734), Louis-Dominique Cartouche (1693-1721), Dick Turpin (1706-39), Louis Mandrin (1725-55), and Schinderhannes (1783-1803). Their exploits were made known, exaggerated, and idealized not only by word of mouth but also through broadsides, ballad sheets, prints, and chapbooks." Metzner, 86.

<sup>123</sup> Metzner, 272.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> "The sociopsychological roots of an ideal of church music as an escape from the world can be seen in the bourgeois tendency to separate these two spheres and consign religion to a ghetto, thereby protecting it from "reality" and at the same time preventing it from interfering in that reality. In the nineteenth century, bourgeois religion was a religion of the inner psyche." Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 182.

basis at his patrons' commands. However, in the Age of Revolution, as an autonomous "artist" in his private sphere, he could devote himself to the cultivation of his exceptionality, whether that was in mastery of the art of composition or instrumental virtuosity, and take his cultivated exceptionality to the public sphere for publicity.<sup>126</sup>

The separation of private and public can also be used as a metaphor for the separation of labor between composers (private) and performers (public).<sup>127</sup> Metaphorically, if the public sphere is to be defined as something that is accessible by the general public, then commodified sheet music is public, whereas an internalized music, eliminating the need for a score, would be private, inaccessible to others unless the "owner" chooses to share. Through all of their cultivations and practice that negotiated the private and public spheres virtuosos were worshiped almost as cult figures in the 1830's and '40s by showing their audiences how to bridge the normally unbridgeable private-public gap and fulfilling their "subliminal wish that the needs of an inward or autonomously conceived self could be fully met by, and realized in, the public world."<sup>128</sup> Virtuosos expressed their most extreme emotions and intimate thoughts on stage, and encouraged their audiences to join in by expressing their empathy. That Liszt allowed his audience members to identify themselves with his personal expression can be seen in

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<sup>126</sup> Ferris, 353. Ferris explored how private performances were more congenial to "serious music." Clara Wieck-Schumann initially played the "composer's music," including Robert Schumann's works, almost exclusively in such private settings, reserving the "performer's music" for public concerts. I will explore his research and topic, more in the third chapter.

<sup>127</sup> "Musicologists have long argued over Robert Schumann's enforced turn from performance to composition, from extroversion to creative introspection." J.Q. Davies, *Romantic Anatomies of Performance* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 2014), 160-161.

<sup>128</sup> Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man: On the Social Psychology of Capitalism* (New York: Random House, 1974), Chap. 8. Paraphrased in Gooley, "The Battle Against Instrumental Virtuosity," 91.

reviews of his performances. Speaking of Liszt's lyricism, Franz Schober reported that "Liszt's magical moments liberate and exalt the soul, they are radiations of his beautiful, brilliant, loving beings, which without diminishing him, transmit to others... In this same way the inspiration of his performance passes over to his person, [and] transforms his listeners into his friends."<sup>129</sup> Liszt was so powerful in this that audience members, especially women, were reputed to be driven to madness. Heinrich Heine called this social phenomenon "Lisztomania (*Lisztomanie* in German and French)": "And what celebration! A true madness, unheard of in the annals of furor! But what is the basis of this phenomenon? Perhaps the solution to this question belongs more in pathology than in aesthetics."<sup>130</sup>

What Liszt achieved through his performance was an experience of the sublime for the audience. Sublimity was the "phenomena of unsettling power and grandeur...[that] overwhelmed the beholder's sensory and cognitive faculties, inspired a mixture of fear, attraction and admiration, and could catalyze ecstatic, elevating experiences."<sup>131</sup> In the experience of sublimity, one may overcome his subjectivity and transcend the boundaries between the private and the public spheres.

Music as a vehicle of emotional expression and the experience of the sublime started with Sentimentalism, a concept credited to Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury (1621-1683). It trusted human emotions, not intellect, as a guide to moral

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<sup>129</sup> Franz von Schober, *Briefe über F. Liszts Aufenthalt in Ungarn* (Berlin: 1843), 5. Quoted in Dana Gooley, *The Virtuoso Liszt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 243.

<sup>130</sup> Heinrich Heine, *Heinrich Heine und die Musik*, ed. Gerhard Muller (Cologne: 1987), 156. Quoted in Gooley, *The Virtuoso Liszt*, 203.

<sup>131</sup> Alexander Stefaniak, *Schumann's Virtuosity: Criticism, Composition, and Performance in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016), 124-125.

behavior and led to *Empfindsamkeit* – sensitive music, in northern German instrumental music in the mid-eighteenth century.<sup>132</sup> C.P.E. Bach's keyboard music is considered to exemplify its ideals: intimacy, sentimentality and subjectivity.<sup>133</sup> The *Sturm und Drang* movement came somewhat later in chronology with its peak in the 1770s. It is generally more intensely dramatic than the *Empfindsamer stil*, but the two are closely associated styles in German music, sometimes considered the same thing. Unlike *Empfindsamkeit*, *Sturm und Drang* is often associated with theatrical music. However, Haydn symphonies in minor keys as well as Mozart's, and Beethoven's earlier piano sonatas in minor keys are also referred to as examples of the dramatic *Sturm und Drang*.<sup>134</sup> *Sturm und Drang* in keyboard music helped promote early keyboard virtuosity.<sup>135</sup>

Anthony Ashley-Cooper, third earl of Shaftesbury, also was one of the two key thinkers who proposed the idea of the sublime, along with John Dennis. They crossed the Alps, each at the turn of the eighteenth century, and propagated the idea of the sublime as an aesthetic quality in nature that was distinct from beauty. Whereas beauty was in accordance with reason, the sublime was awe-inspiring and beyond reason, human

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<sup>132</sup> Daniel Heartz and Bruce Alan Brown, s.v. "Empfindsamkeit." *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press.  
<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/08774>, [accessed, January 22, 2017]

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Daniel Heartz and Bruce Alan Brown, s.v. "Sturm und Drang." *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press.  
<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/27035>, [accessed, January 22, 2017]

<sup>135</sup> "The forbears of virtuoso pianism lay in the late-eighteenth-century Sturm und Drang... In the rhapsodic, expressive style of the Sturm und Drang – a style with free fantasy as its ideal form – that virtuoso pianists found the counterpart to passage work and figuration that they required in order to raise piano virtuosity to a compositional phenomenon of historic significance." Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 135.



perception or cognition. Taking up their ideas, in 1756 Edmund Burke explored the concept of sublime as a dichotomy to the notion of beauty in his *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. To Burke, the relationship between sublimity and beauty was like that between passion versus understanding, obscurity versus clarity, and invisibility versus visibility. Not having a clear image or tangible information could move the imagination to inspire awe. Burke used instrumental music as an example of such awesome experience, contributing to a general trend that imbued textless instrumental music with new significance.<sup>136</sup> He posited that “a great clearness helps but little towards affecting the passions, as it is in some sort an enemy to all enthusiasms whatsoever.”<sup>137</sup> To the audience, the superhuman spectacles virtuosos displayed at their instruments were beyond comprehension, and sublime. To the pianist, eliminating the printed score, the corporeal and visual representation of the music, made their musical experience more sublime.

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<sup>136</sup> Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, The Harvard Classics, 24, Part 2. (New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1909–14), Bartleby.com, 2001. [www.bartleby.com/24/2/](http://www.bartleby.com/24/2/). [accessed, January 22, 2017].

<sup>137</sup> “Of the Difference between Clearness and Obscurity in Regards to the Passions.” “It is one thing to make an idea clear, and another to make it affecting to the imagination...The proper manner of conveying the affections of the mind from one to another, is by words; there is a great insufficiency in all other methods of communication; and so far is a clearness of imagery from being absolutely necessary to an influence upon the passions, that they may be considerably operated upon, without presenting any image at all, by certain sounds adapted to that purpose; of which we have a sufficient proof in the acknowledged and powerful effects of instrumental music. In reality, a great clearness helps but little towards affecting the passions, as it is in some sort an enemy to all enthusiasms whatsoever.” Burke.

### 3. Virtuosity and Piano Recital

Since the popularity of *Sturm und Drang*, piano virtuosity became increasingly about subjectivity, irrationality and drama, in short the sublime. The images often associated with Liszt's performances, such as battle, storm, Greek mythology, etc. exemplify the sublime in virtuosity. Perhaps it was in order to enhance his exceptionality that he chose to present himself as a recitalist, alone on the stage from the beginning to the end, without the aid of supporting artists or the printed score, heightening his awesome sublimity.

If the popularity of virtuosos during the Age of Revolution were due to the demonstrative ease of their negotiation between the private and the public sphere, then Liszt's first recitals could be described as an epitome of such demonstration. He played all by himself, offering sublime experience to his audience through his awesome virtuosity in execution of sublime music by Beethoven, Schubert, and others. Then, he would come down from the stage where the seats were arranged for him to move about in order to chat with the audience members.<sup>138</sup> His recital treated the Hanover Square Room as his own grandiose private sphere. The fact that he first chose to call his one-man show "soliloquy" attest to the intimacy he prescribed for him and his audience.

Liszt explained the reasons behind his break from the tradition of miscellany, a collaborative concert with many supporting artists, to Princess Belgiojoso, his supporter: "Wearied with warfare [with other musicians], not being able to compose a programme [*sic*] which could have common sense, I have ventured to give a series of concerts all by

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<sup>138</sup> Walker, 356.

myself, affecting the Louis XIV style, and saying cavalierly to the public, ‘*Le concert, c’est moi.*’ (The concert is – myself).”<sup>139</sup> The solo recital was a manifestation of what virtuosity came to symbolize: individualism, freedom from social conventions, and a man’s triumph in the face of challenges. Playing alone was not only an artistic freedom, but also a relief for the soloist from the administrative task of organizing concerts involving multiple performers, as well as the reduction of the financial burden of presenting such a concert.<sup>140</sup> As a part of transforming themselves to enhance their qualities of autonomy and the sublime, they were in the process of elevating themselves above “the menial tasks to which they had traditionally been bound.”<sup>141</sup>

Liszt’s first experiment with the format was done in a private setting in 1839 in Rome. He called it *soliloquy* or *monologues pianistiques* and it included only his compositions and improvisations. On June 9, 1840 in London, Liszt gave what the music journals called *recitals* both in their advertisements and reviews. The etymology of the term recital is the verb “to recite.” By extension, the term “recital” implies a memorized musical delivery.<sup>142</sup> Alan Walker notes the plural form of the term “Recitals” in an event

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<sup>139</sup> Weber, s.v. “Recital.” *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online.* Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/23018>. [accessed, January 22, 2017]

<sup>140</sup> Reich, 259. Although I cannot attest to her calling these her “recitals,” Clara Wieck-Schumann adapted the practice of solo playing throughout on her Russian trip in 1844 because supporting artists were too difficult to arrange, and loved it: “‘I gave all my concerts alone, without any supporting artists, something I shall always do from now on; it is the best way.’ She was not able to break entirely with the tradition, however, because audiences expected to hear a variety of performers, and Clara, like her father, always kept the demands of the public in mind.”

<sup>141</sup> William Weber, “From Self-Managing Musician to Independent Concert Agent” in *The Musician as Entrepreneur, 1700-1914: Managers, Charlatans, and Idealists*, ed. William Weber (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 115.

<sup>142</sup> William Weber, s.v. “Recital.”

announcement, and suggests that “each piece, apparently, was to be ‘recited,’” again suggesting memorized deliveries.<sup>143</sup> Weber states, “because reading a poem in public *by heart* had been called a ‘recital,’ advertisements for Liszt’s concert stated that he would offer “recitals” of his recent *fantasies* at each concert.”<sup>144</sup> He also notes that the term continued to be applied to concerts themselves, even when the offerings were not all solos, and speculates that the term “may have been used chiefly when a pianist played from *memory* rather than scores.”<sup>145</sup> In reviews of these recitals, the verb “to recite” was used synonymously with the term “recital.” For example, a review under the heading “M. Liszt’s Pianoforte *Recitals*” read “On Tuesday last, M. Liszt gave us his first *recitation*.”<sup>146</sup> Reviews of Marie Pleyel’s recital from Willis’s Room in London given on May 18<sup>th</sup>, 1846, concur that she gave the entire program of her “recital” from memory. The Morning Chronicle wrote “What a wonderful *memory* does Madam Pleyel possess!

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<sup>143</sup> “M. Liszt will give, at Two o’clock on Tuesday morning [sic], June 9, 1840, RECITALS on the PIANOFORTE.” Walker, 356. Walker also goes into details about the decision for the term by Frederick Beale (a partner of J.B. Cramer, the pianist and publisher).

<sup>144</sup> Weber, *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste*, 160, [emphasis added.]

However, an article written also by William Weber under the entry “recital” defines the term as “A term in use since the 16th century to denote a speech or a narrative account. In a musical context, the term denotes the performance or interpretation of a specific work. Since the mid-19th century, it has come to mean a concert given by one performer or a small group.” It mentions Liszt’s solo concerts being referred to as “recitals” as “using the term in the older sense of ‘interpretation’: one announcement stated that ‘M. Liszt will give ... Recitals on the pianoforte’ and another that he would ‘give a recital of one of his great fantasies’. His article does not mention memory. Weber, s.v. “Recital”

I would like to argue, however, one would not “interpret” a piece that he wrote himself, and therefore, it is more natural to assume that at least in the case of the latter quote, the term “recite” did indeed mean, to deliver from memory.

<sup>145</sup> Weber, *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste*, 160. [emphasis added.]

<sup>146</sup> “M. Liszt’s Pianoforte Recitals [Beethoven, Sinfonia pastorale. Liszt, Hexameron, Neapolitan Tarantella, Galop chromatique],” *The Musical Journal* I, no. 24 (June 16, 1840): 382-383. RIPM - Retrospective Index to Music Periodicals, EBSCOhost [accessed February 3, 2016]. [emphasis added]

Every note was executed without copy and yet there was not the slightest error.”<sup>147</sup> The Morning Herald raved, “A glance at the foregoing programme, the whole of which she *recited* without notes, will satisfy the inquirer as to the extent and variety of her skill.”<sup>148</sup> Such accounts indicate that the term “recital” implied a reading from memory.

#### 4. Industrialization and the Evolution of the Piano and Piano Technique

In the history of virtuosity, the piano was a latecomer. The aforementioned violin virtuoso Tartini was in his seventies when the piano started being featured in public performances in 1760s. One of the first pianists was J.C. Bach. In 1766, Bach published his six keyboard sonatas, endorsing the pianoforte as an alternative to the harpsichord on its title page.<sup>149</sup> The piano quickly became the only instrument to be regularly played by a soloist in performances.<sup>150</sup> Being able to create complex musical sonority and execute even a symphony as a soloist enhanced the autonomous quality of piano virtuosos. Solo piano playing was the most significant factor in the emergence of international virtuosos: the list of piano virtuosos before Liszt includes Clementi, Cramer, Dussek, Field, Hummel, and Moscheles; the earliest of them started their career in 1780s.<sup>151</sup> The

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<sup>147</sup> "Reception of Madame Pleyel by the English Press," *The Musical World* 21, no. 21 (May 26, 1846): 239-241. RIPM - Retrospective Index to Music Periodicals, EBSCOhost (accessed January 22, 2017), 239. "The Morning Chronicle" [emphasis added]

<sup>148</sup> "Reception of Madame Pleyel by the English Press," 240. "The Morning Herald" [emphasis added]

<sup>149</sup> Edwin M. Ripin, et al. s.v. "Pianoforte." *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press.  
<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/21631>. [accessed April 8, 2017]

<sup>150</sup> Leon Plantinga, "The Piano and the Nineteenth Century" in *Nineteenth-Century Piano Music*, ed. R. Todd Larry Todd (New York, Shirmer Books, 1990), 4.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

evolution of virtuosic techniques constantly demanded louder, more durable pianos capable of a wide range of dynamics, colors, expression and register. In turn, the advancement of the piano as an instrument enabled pianists to explore new sound effects and techniques to create bigger musical gestures and impressions. The evolution of the piano by piano makers and evolution of piano techniques by virtuosos created a synergy that energized the piano industry as a whole.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, the piano developed at an intense pace, reflecting the revolutionary force of industrialization. There were a series of improvements made to the piano between competitive piano makers. Christofori's initial idea for his invention of the *fortepiano* in 1700 was a harpsichord with dynamic variations. It had only 49 keys. By the time J.C. Bach purchased his Zumpe in 1750, the number of keys had increased to 58. By the middle of the nineteenth century, as Edwin Ripin writes, pianos were transformed from low-tensioned, light-action fortepianos of five or five and a half octaves to massively powerful, seven-octave instruments with massive power that resembled the modern piano.<sup>152</sup> In the quest for greater dynamic range and powerful sound, the wire tension increased from 10 kg per string in 1801 to 42 kg by 1850. To support the tension, metal was incorporated into the frame. To match the heavier strings, the hammers had to weigh more than double its initial weight. This increased the weight of the keys. To play the note *c*'' required 34 grams in 1800, but in 1860 it had become 80 grams.<sup>153</sup> All of these changes made piano playing more athletic. The physical displays at the piano yielded awe from the audience. Virtuosos like Liszt

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<sup>152</sup> Ripin, et al. "Pianoforte."

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

and Thalberg made their reputations partially because the piano had become such an imposing, impressive instrument that withstood physical exertion. Liszt famously described his daily regime of trills, sixths, octaves, tremolos, and repeated notes exercises for four to five hours.<sup>154</sup> However, as Leon Plantinga observes, this would have been inconceivable on the older pianos. With the perfection of repetition, and introduction of metal braces in the 1820s, pianists began to innovate new piano techniques, employing their body weight for more intensity, resonance and spectacle.<sup>155</sup>

And employ weight and force they did. Beethoven always wanted more from his still-evolving pianos.<sup>156</sup> His piano sonatas always demanded more extreme ranges of dynamics, tone colors and registers. In fact, he went back to revise his Third Piano Concerto when the higher register became available.<sup>157</sup> Perhaps it was his desire to draw more than what the piano could give, that made his playing “rough” and “hard.” Numerous anecdotes attest to his mistreatment of his pianos.<sup>158</sup> With his increasing hearing loss, he performed less frequently, and eventually ceased performing altogether. But the few anecdotes of his playing the piano often involve broken strings, buzzes and rattles.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Liszt’s letter from 1832, quoted in Plantinga, “The Piano and the Nineteenth Century,” 6.

<sup>155</sup> Plantinga, “The Piano and the Nineteenth Century,” 6.

<sup>156</sup> On the types of pianos Beethoven had at different periods of his life and which piano he ultimately preferred, see Rowland, “Piano and Pianists, c. 1770-1825,” 56-57.

<sup>157</sup> Charles Rosen, *Beethoven’s Piano Sonatas: A Short Companion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 117.

<sup>158</sup> Tilman Skowronek, *Beethoven the Pianist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 55. Beethoven himself attributed his organ playing to his early “roughness” in piano playing.

<sup>159</sup> Schonberg, 81. In the mid-1790s, Anton Reicha turned pages for Beethoven’s performance of the Mozart Concerto, but had to run back and forth between taking care of the broken strings and turning pages.

We have more images of Liszt in the midst of his virtuosic actions in the form of paintings, caricatures, sculptures, and elaborate verbal descriptions. It was with Liszt that the piano became a battle field. He broke the strings and keys so often that he kept a second and sometimes even a third piano in waiting.<sup>160</sup> Many critics commented on the visual aspects of Liszt's playing. Describing Liszt's playing one reviewer wrote, "[he] throws his hands upon the keyboard, they do not sing, they shout, they thunder, under the impression. He does not touch, he grasps; he does not untwist the hidden chains, he drags them out."<sup>161</sup> Robert Schumann wrote, "if Liszt played behind the scenes, a great deal of the poetry of his playing would be lost."<sup>162</sup> And at least to a certain extent, Liszt consciously offered his images in action as a part of his performance. German historian Kurd von Schlözer described the experience in 1841: "...you had to *see* him at the piano!

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Spohr's famous account of the rehearsal to Beethoven's last performance in the April 1814 relates Beethoven pounding the forte passages so hard that the strings of the piano jangled. Although this was due to his hearing impairment (the report also includes Beethoven playing the piano passages so softly that notes would not come out), it is still a testament to Beethoven's passionate style of musicality and pianism.

Later in life, Beethoven's pianos at home had unattended broken strings.

Mark Kroll, *Ignaz Moscheles and the Changing World of Musical Europe* (Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2014), 50. In 1823 Moscheles borrowed Beethoven's Broadwood for a performance to promote the English piano to Viennese public, but the damage to the piano had an adverse effect. The reviews report "buzzes and rattles" when the keys are struck and Moscheles having to "remove, during a left hand trill, a treble string that had broken at the very outset."

<sup>160</sup> Friedrich Wieck, *Briefe aus den Jahren 1830-1838*. Ed. Käthe Walch-Schumann (Cologne, 1968), 93-94, quoted in Gooley, *The Virtuoso Liszt*, 108. Wieck reported on having witnessed this in his concert in Vienna, 1838. "After he annihilated Thalberg's Érard in the first piece, he played the fantasy on a C. Graf, broke two brass strings, fetched himself the second walnut C. Frag from the corner and played his etude, after which he, having once again broken two strings, said aloud to the public that it [the etude] had not succeeded and he would like to play it again. As he entered, he vehemently threw his gloves and handkerchief on the ground in front of the piano..."

<sup>161</sup> Quoted in Gooley, 108.

<sup>162</sup> Gibbs, "'Just Two Words. Enormous Success,'" 199.



Everything he did on the keys was mirrored in his features, flashed in his eyes and electrified all his movements ...It was divine!”<sup>163</sup>

Liszt’s mesmerizing visual presentation at the piano might explain the contradictory remarks about whether Liszt played all, the majority, or only some of his repertoire from memory.<sup>164</sup> Many drawings of Liszt in the midst of his performance capture the scores in front of him. However, a pianist cannot look at the keyboard and the music at the same time. The keyboard is underneath the sitter’s general eye level and the music stand is above. In order to play a piece of music at a relative pace, the pianist would need the tactile memory of the keyboard and the piece, as well as the aural memory of the music, visual memory of the score and/or cerebral memory of the music, at least in some fragments, even if the music were placed on the stand. The faster the pace, and the more number of notes the pianist has to play, the more they would have to have committed to their memory in order to play accurately and precisely. Therefore, whether Liszt had the music on the stand or not, he would have had to play most of it from memory, especially since he moved so much when he played. With his dramatic movements, and with the number of notes he played especially in a fast piece, he would not have been able to read from the score. The gesticulation had been a part of Liszt’s

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<sup>163</sup> Quoted in endnote 6 in Leppert, 55.

<sup>164</sup> “[During his stay in Berlin], he performed some fifty pieces by eighteen composers, many of them public premieres, *all apparently from memory*.” Gibbs, “‘Just Two Words. Enormous Success’,” 201.

“Berlin recitals of 1841-42....in ten weeks he gave twenty-one concerts and played eighty works – fifty of them from memory.” Rellstab, 41ff quoted in Walker, 286.

“For Liszt’s Berlin public recitals 1841-42, somewhat more than half of the (few dozen) items appear to have been performed without the score, a far cry from the level usually expected today and hardly deserving of the stunned astonishment of some of his biographers, but enough to amaze the audiences.” Hamilton, 76.

piano playing since childhood. Czerny's report on the eight-year-old Liszt's playing at his audition tells us that Liszt "swayed back and forth as if drunk," so much so that Czerny worried that the child would fall to the ground.<sup>165</sup> Of course, Czerny's report does not include whether the child had his music on the stand or not.

Clara Schumann accused Liszt of being "a smasher of pianos."<sup>166</sup> Alan Walker defends Liszt by referring to the fragility of the contemporary instrument. He claims that even Clara broke one or two strings in public, and it would have been dismissed as a normal professional hazard.<sup>167</sup> Perhaps the vulnerability of contemporary pianos added to Liszt's dramatic effect.<sup>168</sup> It is even possible that Liszt had calculated the dramatic effect of broken strings as a part of his battle with, or against, the piano. Sometimes he came out on stage and threw a handkerchief, or a glove, to the floor before he "fell upon the keys like a vulture."<sup>169</sup> Memorization would enhance, or possibly is even necessary to, the effect of such virtuosic drama. To illustrate the point, one would only need to imagine an opposite scenario: that of Liszt pouncing on the keys and breaking the strings while making sure in his score that he is pouncing and breaking the right keys and strings. The obviously predetermined and practiced choreography would turn the show into a comedy.

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<sup>165</sup> James Deaville, "A Star is Born? Czerny, Liszt, and the Pedagogy of Virtuosity," in *Beyond the Art of Finger Dexterity: Reassessing Carl Czerny*, ed. David Gramit (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2008), 56.

<sup>166</sup> Walker, 287.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Gooley, *The Virtuoso Liszt*. The third subsection to Gooley's second chapter "Virtuosity and Violence" has sections titled "The Piano as Victimized Object" (P. 106-109) and "The Piano as Resisting Enemy" (P. 109-113).

<sup>169</sup> Gooley, *The Virtuoso Liszt*, 106.

## 5. Industrialization and Mechanized Piano Practice

The nineteenth-century piano virtuosos, epitomized by Liszt, had their predecessors on the violin, most notably Paganini. Carl Dahlhaus saw virtuosity on the violin as less consequential to the overall history of nineteenth-century music, but saw its significance in that “not just Liszt, but also Schumann and Brahms, attempted to transfer Paganini’s virtuosity from the violin to the piano.”<sup>170</sup> Metzner writes that “[Liszt] performed almost everything at his concerts from memory. Paganini and he were among the first to do so.”<sup>171</sup> Although Metzner’s historical accuracy is questionable in this regard,<sup>172</sup> the association between Paganini and Liszt is historically justifiable. Since he first attended Paganini’s concert in 1832, Liszt consciously emulated Paganini’s virtuosity, persona and success. Their compositional and performance styles, as well as their personas, are the two considered most synonymous with the term “virtuoso” today. Paganini inspired Liszt to set a new standard of piano technique, just as Paganini did for violin technique. Liszt heard Paganini play in Paris on April, 1832 and went into a state of shock. Liszt’s often-quoted letter to his friend Pierre Wolff portrayed the frenzy Paganini sent Liszt into: “I practice four to five hours of exercises...Ah! Provided I don’t go mad you will find in me an artist! ‘And I too am a painter!’ cried Michelangelo the first time he beheld a masterpiece. Your friend, though insignificant and poor, cannot

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<sup>170</sup> Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 134.

<sup>171</sup> Metzner, 155.

<sup>172</sup> In general, Metzner’s mentions of memorized musical performance in association with virtuosity in his book lack substantiation and authenticity.

leave off repeating those words of the great man ever since Paganini's last performance."<sup>173</sup>

Much of Liszt's performance may be attributed to his emulation of Paganini. For example, Liszt's string-breaking resembles Paganini's similar spectacle. Paganini, like Liszt, was famous for breaking his strings: "If a string broke, he could play equally well on three; if another broke, he could play equally well on two; in fact, his specialty was to play an entire piece on one string alone, with which he would bring the house down."<sup>174</sup> Liszt "broke strings so easily, he usually had no choice but to continue playing (in mid-performance he once pushed a technician who was trying to repair the instrument off stage)."<sup>175</sup> The contemporary piano was indeed more fragile than our modern piano today. However, Liszt seems to have far exceeded his peers in the number of strings he broke, and it may have been at least partially intentional, as a part of the spectacle. If a pianist was to attempt breaking a string, he would have his fingers point "from above downward, often in a straight line," or jump around in chordal passages, reaching "into the keys with a powerful grip, pouncing upon them with lion leaps," as Liszt's playing at concerts were described in reviews.<sup>176</sup> In any case, both Liszt and Paganini had

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<sup>173</sup> Quoted from Liszt's letter to Pierre Wolff (Paris, May 2, 1832) in Walker, 173.

<sup>174</sup> Walker, 287.

"Paganini's technique of performing entire pieces on only one string was one of the hallmarks of his virtuosity." Kawabata, 11.

<sup>175</sup> Gooley, *The Virtuoso Liszt*, 109. [parenthesis original]

<sup>176</sup> *Allgemeine privilegirte schlesische Zeitung*, 7 February 1842. Quoted in Gooley, *The Virtuoso Liszt*, 107.

aggressive approaches to their respective instruments. As a result, they were both compared to demons, Napoleon, a military commander, and a conqueror.<sup>177</sup>

Was memorized performance another manifestation of Liszt's emulation of Paganini? Paganini's virtuosity inherited not only the Italian violin tradition but also the tradition of violin performance as a form of popular entertainment as parlor tricks and circus acts as well.<sup>178</sup> It was also inspired by the Italian opera tradition.<sup>179</sup> Memorization was integral to the theatricality of these traditions, and as a successor it would have made sense for Paganini to deliver his music from memory. If Liszt did choose to play from memory to enhance the effect of his virtuosity – as Metzner suggests for all virtuosos – the inspiration might very well have come from Paganini.<sup>180</sup>

However, the piano was different from the violin – not embraced as an extension of the violinist's body, but a novel and evolving machine that stood on its own and asserted a certain presence. Heinrich Heine wrote in an essay in 1843: "When it comes to violinists, virtuosity is not entirely the result of mechanical finger velocity and sheer technique, as it is with pianists. The violin is an instrument which has almost human whims."<sup>181</sup> On the contrary, piano virtuosity was a product of the Industrial Revolution,

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<sup>177</sup> Kawabata, 86-87, 99-100.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 5-6.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 7.

Also refer to Dahlhaus in describing one of the reasons behind the emergence of violin virtuosos to monadic cantabile. Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 134.

<sup>180</sup> Metzner, 2.

<sup>181</sup> Heinrich Heine, "Musickalische Saison in Paris", *Zeitungsberichte über Musik und Malerei*, ed. Michael Mann (Frankfurt am Main: Insel-Verlag, 1964), quoted in Kawabata, 26.

not only because the evolution of the instrument allowed virtuosos to continue pioneering new and more sublime techniques and effects, but because the virtuoso, in front of the piano, represented a man facing the increasingly mechanized world. The piano, with its rapid and obvious evolution in size, features, sound and durability, reflected the advancement of the mechanical age. In many of the extant caricatures of virtuosos at the piano, they are depicted as seizing the mechanical piano, or are themselves machines, either working on, or as a part of, the machine. Richard Leppert puts it aptly: “virtuosos performing on a musical machine, fed – and fed from – contemporaneous fascinations with and anxieties over the brave new industrial world... The concatenation of artist qua machine... [was] constructed out of the very mythologies of industry and modernity to which music and other arts were ascribed as an escape from or an alternative to.”<sup>182</sup> It was as though the virtuosos were trying to “out-machine the machinery.”<sup>183</sup> Rumors circulated that Henselt played Bach on a dummy keyboard for ten hours a day (while reading the Bible) while Dreyschock practiced sixteen hours a day to perfect his octaves.<sup>184</sup> When Liszt practiced, his neighbors complained; “[He] never played either a written piece or an improvisation. He...played for hours on end, double time, with both hands, on the same note!”<sup>185</sup> To his students, he prescribed:

...octaves, at least three hours a day, for months – in scales modulating through every key and in all permutations, first “going from a *pianissimo* to a great *forte* and vice versa,” then staccato filled in with diminished chords, then in broken patterns, repeated strokes, and so on. Whatever the variation,

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<sup>182</sup> Leppert, 47.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> Davies, 160.

<sup>185</sup> Comtesse Dash [pseud. for vicomtesse de Poillou de Saint-Mars], *Mémoires des autres*, 6 vol. (Paris: Librairie Illustree, 1896-97), 4, 149-50. Quoted in Metzner, 143.

Liszt counseled, “the tones” should be “equal at all times, broadly stroked, and the wrist supple and flexible, the hand soft and falling.” The key should never be struck with the extremity or nail of the finger, but “with the ball of the finger, which flattens the finger, of course, and allow it freedom.” Liszt charged that the sound of the octaves be kept “pure, full, round, and complete.”<sup>186</sup>

Liszt assured his pupils that he himself did this “for hours on end...while at the same time reading to avoid boredom.”<sup>187</sup> This kind of mindless rote practice induces tactile memory; of the keyboard, musical patterns, fingerings, and finger-hand-wrist-art-shoulder-body positions.

The notion born as a result of Industrialization, that what can be analyzed can be mass produced, influenced pianism and piano pedagogy. Virtuoso techniques and virtuosos themselves were studied by their competitors, critics and aspiring virtuosos, in hopes of replication and mass production. Paganini’s technique was analyzed, and the findings were published in 1821 by Kapellmeister Carl Guhr in order to assist young violinists.<sup>188</sup> Piano exercises inundated the market in the forms of practice aids and method books in the nineteenth century. Example of finger exercises from this time can be found in Czerny’s etudes organized in volumes in progressive difficulties. The sheer volume of Czerny’s massive output as a composer in general, but especially of these etudes, attest to how formulaic and highly patterned these exercises are. If one considers that he composed only in the evenings after twelve hours of his daily teaching, the

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<sup>186</sup> Davies, 155.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

<sup>188</sup> Myles W. Jackson “Physics, Machines and Musical Pedagogy in Nineteenth-Century Germany” *History of Science*, 42 (2004): 390-91.

patterned exercises make more sense.<sup>189</sup> The formulae allowed Czerny to “work on four or five compositions simultaneously running from one to the other as the ink dried enough for him to turn the pages, meanwhile carrying on an animated conversation.”<sup>190</sup> The quote gives us an image of a composer that is almost as mindless as the pianist practicing while reading a book. Memorizing a highly patterned piece, like learning to play scales and arpeggios, is not only easy, but gives a pianist prototypes of patterns with which to analyze and memorize other works.

Physicists “attempted to quantify virtuosity with a view of assisting musicians interested in forming teaching academies.”<sup>191</sup> J. B. Logier’s chiroplast (or hand-director) was invented in 1814 (Figure 1).<sup>192</sup> The metronome was patented in 1815. Henri Hertz’s dactylion was somewhat later in 1836 (Figure 2). Robert Schumann attributed his hand injury to an aid similar to these. Its general success and popularity with students and pedagogues was widely recognized. In 1821, the Prussian government incorporated Logier’s chiroplast and his teaching method with group lessons into its “unprecedented music reform...to use music as a cultural resource to unite members of Prussia’s *Bildungsbürgertum*.”<sup>193</sup> Now, not only pianos or piano etudes and teaching methods, but also pianists were mass-produced. Proliferation of amateurs, and aspiring virtuosos flocked to virtuosic concerts, eager to see the pianists’ fingerings and techniques, in

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<sup>189</sup> Carl Czerny, "Recollections from My Life," trans. Sanders Ernest, *The Musical Quarterly* 42, no. 3 (1956): 302-17. <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.rice.edu/stable/740427>. P. 313 [access, April 16, 2016]

<sup>190</sup> Schonberg, 100.

<sup>191</sup> Jackson, 374.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., 375.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 384.



hopes of emulating their effects.<sup>194</sup> These were the ticket-buyers who purchased method books by virtuosos and potentially became their pupils. Czerny wrote, “Virtuosity and brilliant style are scorned for the most part only by those who had not mastered them or who, with the passing of time, have lost them. Just as the weak of stomach regard savory dishes with resentment and disgust.”<sup>195</sup> If Czerny was right, the mass-produced amateurs and aspiring virtuosos would have supported the anti-virtuoso rhetoric out of jealousy, while at the same time supporting the virtuoso market as a consumer.

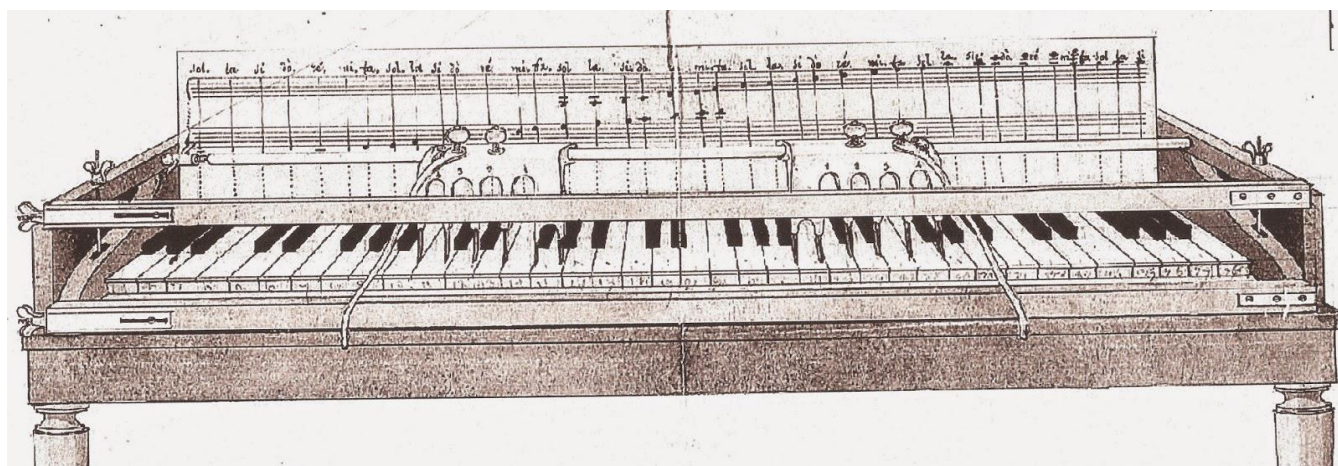


Figure 1. Chyroplast. Image taken from: <http://rparchivesmusiquefacteurs.blogspot.com/2014/11/quelques-instruments-de-tortures-du.html> [accessed December 21, 2016] It consisted of two parallel horizontal wooden rods attached to the frame of the keyboard through which the pupil was to insert his/her wrists, which would then have been allowed to move only sideways. Above the keys were a brass rod with sliding finger guides also determining the positioning of the pianist's fingers.

<sup>194</sup> “[Complaining that orchestra members crowded around the piano ogling as Thalberg obstructed the audience’s views] ...it is quite impossible for ladies who are seated at any distance from the performer to observe at all how the different passages are fingered.” “Concerts, Musical Soirees of the Nobility,” *World of Fashion and Continental Feuilletons*, 159 (1 June 1837), 124. Quoted in Davies, 99.

<sup>195</sup> Attilio Bottegai “Carl Czerny’s Recollections: An Overview and an Edition of Two Unpublished Autograph Sources,” *Beyond the Art of Finger Dexterity: Reassessing Carl Czerny*, ed. David Gramit (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2008), 47.

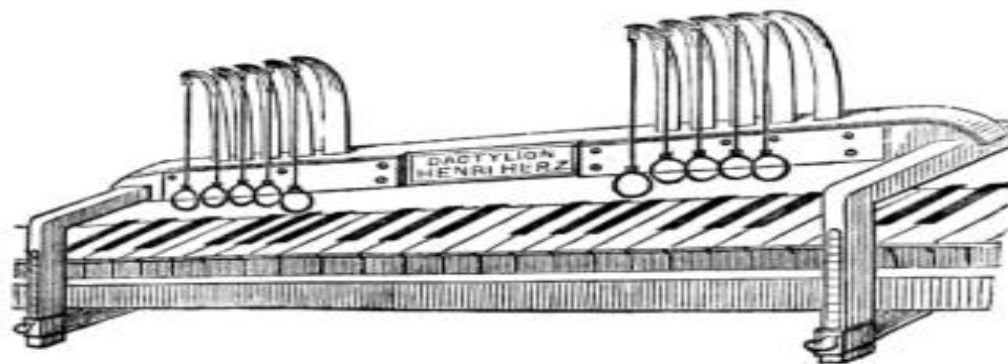


Figure 2. Dactylion (image taken from <http://www.pianisttopianist.com/?p=10> [accessed October 12, 2014] Ten rings for ten fingers, hanging on strings, sliding along the attached rail above the keyboard. They were meant to provide resistance to finger motions in order to strengthen them.

But Liszt made “music, not business.”<sup>196</sup> And his virtuosity was supposed to assert his exceptionality, not to serve as a prototype to be cloned. The long hours of repetitive practicing while reading (Homer, the Bible, Plato, Locke, Byron, Hugo ...), was not to mechanize his pianism, but for his spiritual musicality to transcend the corporeal. He called this approach “*la main morte* (dead hands).”<sup>197</sup> He told his pupil Hans von Bülow “I crucify, like a good Christ, the flesh of my fingers in order to make them obedient.”<sup>198</sup> Another pupil’s mother reported that Liszt stated his purpose as “to attain levels where ‘one does not perceive the fingers, or the nails, or the instrument,’ levels only achievable (it would seem) by a maniacal devotion to octaves.”<sup>199</sup> Liszt, and other pianists with long hours of practicing, were imposing their minds and will over

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<sup>196</sup> Gibbs, “‘Just Two Words. Enormous Success,’” 188. When Princess Metternich asked how business had been Liszt famously responded: “I make music, not business.”

<sup>197</sup> Davies, 155.

<sup>198</sup> Quoted in Davies, 156.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

their bodies. It was as though they had internalized the anti-virtuoso rhetoric and were punishing their hands for their virtuosity.

The question of exceptionality in virtuosity added another dimension when in 1821, Dietrich Nikolaus Winkel invented the “componium,” a mechanical improviser that used early algorithms to randomly choose different two measures to create a total of eighty-measure novel “pieces” each time.<sup>200</sup> The componium must have been well-known. Liszt compared Thalberg to it to insult him in 1837, implying that his mechanical piano playing was comparable to a soulless machine.<sup>201</sup> It was invented three years after the publication of Mary Shelly’s “Frankenstein” and created the same fear and anxiety about the value of humanity in the mechanical age. The question was no longer what made a man exceptional to other men, but what made human kind exceptional as beings.

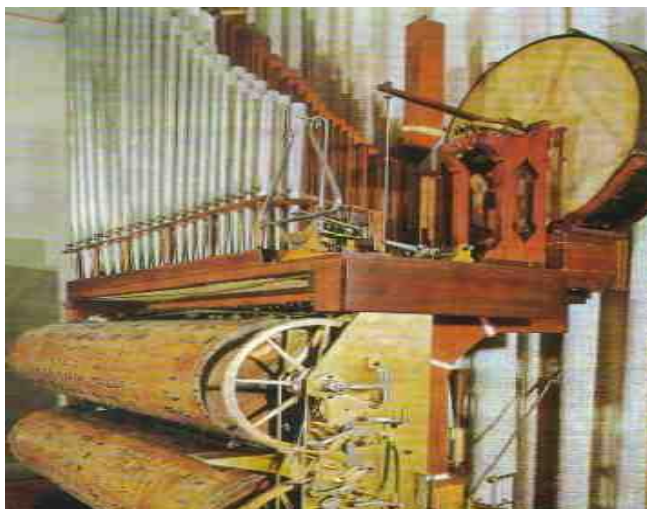


Figure 3: Componium. Image taken from <http://math.pc.vh.free.fr/divers/machines/componium.htm> [accessed, December 21, 2016]

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<sup>200</sup> Arthur W.J.G. Ord-Hume, s.v. "Componium." *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/06211>. [accessed April 8, 2017]

<sup>201</sup> Davies, 121.

Liszt announced his retirement from the concert stage in 1847 at the age of thirty-six. Schumann gave up his aspiration to become a virtuoso due to his hand injury at the age of twenty-one in 1831. After their separation from the piano and their hands, they both focused on dissemination of their musical ideologies and compositions. There were many others that also gave up on the career as a virtuoso like Czerny, Chopin, Henselt, pursuing instead, pedagogy, composition and ascetic and obsessive practicing. It was as though they had decided that the individual exceptionality, and musical spirituality could only be pursued in the private sphere, where they could remain unaffected by the market or Industrialization.

In virtuosity, the importance of the elimination of the score was to enhance the image of virtuosos as an autonomous individual that asserted superhuman control over the instrument, their own bodies, the music and the audience. It was more to promote the virtuosos and their spectacles, and not the musical piece or the composer. However, as Industrialization cheapened the notion of anything that could be analyzed, copied and mass-produced, the value of technical mastery at the instrument diminished. In the end, machines could execute any mechanical acts – without the aid of a visual cue – better, and more easily, than humans. The era of virtuosic memory was taken over by the notion of spiritual transcendence in proper experience of canonized musical works.

## CHAPTER THREE: TRANSCENDENTAL MEMORY

In February 1837, Clara Wieck was in Berlin with her father. Her first concert as the featured pianist was on February 25<sup>th</sup> at the *Hotel de Russie*. Her program was serious, and closer to a piano recital than a miscellany.<sup>202</sup> On February 27<sup>th</sup> the *Preussische Staatszeitung* published a raving review, reflecting the general reception:

...[It] was not mere technical facility that we were called on to admire, but playing on irresistible musical charm, which so captivates the attention that one almost forgets to notice the triumphant skill by which the greatest mechanical difficulties are vanquished. ... [We] cannot refrain from alluding particularly to the thoroughly musical interpretation of a Mendelssohn caprice and of two movements of Beethoven's F minor sonata; to the brilliant execution of a very difficult study by Chopin, and an excessively fatiguing allegro by Henselt, or from mentioning that the young artist played *her entire programme from memory*.<sup>203</sup>

Her performance in Berlin, and especially of Beethoven's "Appassionata," came to be regarded later as the first example of a memorized public performance. Such a narrative has been used often in discussions on the validity of memorization as a performance practice. For example, in his 1999 article in the *New York Times*, Tommasini writes:

Clara Schumann was apparently the first pianist to [play from memory] prominently. In 1837, at 18, she performed Beethoven's "Appassionata" in Berlin "by heart," as affronted critics put it. For this she was labeled "insufferable." Bettina von Arnim, who had been Beethoven's close friend, commented, "With what pretension she seats herself at the piano and plays without the notes!"<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> "Wieck [the father] had, indeed, intended to vary the pianoforte soirees with an orchestral concert of the traditional kind, and it was not the least of his disappointments as entrepreneur that the difficulties of arranging the preliminaries did not allow him sufficient time to carry out this purpose." Florence May, *The Girlhood of Clara Schumann: Clara Wieck and Her Time* (London: E. Arnold, 1912), 196-197. [emphasis added]

<sup>203</sup> Quoted in May, 190.

<sup>204</sup> Anthony Tommasini, "The Pianist in a High-Wire Act," *The New York Times*, July 7, 1999.

The discrepancy between the contemporary review and the narrative in the *New York Times* article is obvious.<sup>205</sup> Bettina's comment, quoted by Tommasini, is nothing more than a "reputed remark."<sup>206</sup> It has always been referred to as a testimony to the general negative reception regarding the practice, but her comment has been unverifiable.<sup>207</sup> Furthermore, Clara was not the "first pianist to play from memory." Although it was not yet a standard practice, I have already listed earlier examples of memorized performances before Clara. I have also demonstrated how some of the earlier

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<sup>205</sup> Reich, 279. Reich attests to the overwhelmingly favorable reception Clara enjoyed. "It is difficult to locate outright hostility in reviews of Clara Schumann's performances. Of some 200 reviews examined, 10 were unfavorable."

May, 193. One of the few criticisms about Clara's concerts in Berlin was that the program was monotonous: "Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung, a giving a resume of the series of concerts, remarks that the programmes, being made up almost entirely of pianoforte solos and songs, were somewhat monotonous, but that the performances of the concert-giver were, throughout, masterly."

<sup>206</sup> "Bettina von Arnim is *reputed to have remarked*, 'How pretentiously she seats herself at the piano.'" Reich, 280. [emphasis added]

<sup>207</sup> The oldest source I could trace Bettina's quote to was: Berthold Litzmann, and Clara Schumann. *Clara Schumann: Ein Künstlerleben, Nach Tagebüchern Und Briefen*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1902), 107.

However, Litzmann does not cite Bettina's quote. Other musicologists all seem to have been citing Litzmann, or have cited more contemporary sources that had cited him.

Even if Bettina had said, written or published her negative remark, her opinion was not likely reflective of the general contemporary reception. Contrary to the *New York Times* article that treats Bettina's negativity as the general contemporary opinion, Communi views Bettina's as a minority opinion based on her own insecurity and jealousy: "Now in her fifties, but still basking in the limelight of her much-published associations with Goethe and Beethoven, she observed the appearance of a new "*Kind*" on the cultural block with a wary eye... 'How pretentiously she seats herself at the piano, and without notes, too!' grumbled the erstwhile provider of literary notes Beethoven may never have written, self-righteously." Alessandra Communi. *The Changing Image of Beethoven: A Study in Mythmaking* (New York: Rizzoli, 1987), 194.

May, 196. May attributes the negativity to professional jealousy and the general opinion that the work of a great master be played with the book.

Litzmann, 90. Litzmann notes how "the professional jealousy of colleagues, and the iniquities of the press were fresh causes of anger. The former were conspicuous by their absence at Clara's concert, and the latter succeeded by means of Rellstab's pen which now found the programme "monotonous", and now spoke of "half-empty halls" ...[despite] the actual great and ever-increasing success which Clara experienced on this hitherto unfriendly ground. He goes on to describe Bettina's remark as an exception.

accounts of memorization might not have been considered noteworthy. In my first chapter, I have also recounted how Wieck's pedagogy prepared Clara for better aural, tactile and intellectual musical memory from the beginning of her training, and that as a result, her 1837 performance was certainly not her first memorized performance.<sup>208</sup> The "Appassionata" had been in her repertoire from 1835.<sup>209</sup> There is no reason to think that she did not perform this or any other work from memory, at any time. So why did this particular memorized performance, and especially Beethoven's Sonata in F Minor op. 57, come to bear such historical significance in consideration to the establishment of memorization as a practice? And why, in stark contrast to the overwhelmingly positive reception Clara received, did Clara's "first" memorized performance come to be associated with negativity?

As opposed to the virtuosic memory discussed in the previous chapter, Clara's memorization would eventually come to be seen as a manifestation of *Werktreue* ("to be true to work"<sup>210</sup>). The origin of the term is attributed to E.T.A. Hoffmann's 1810 essay, "Beethoven's Instrumental Music" by Lydia Goehr:

The genuine artist lives only for the work, which he understands as the composer understood it and which he now performs. He does not make his personality count in any way. All his thoughts and actions are directed towards bringing into being all the wonderful, enchanting pictures and impressions the composer sealed in his work with magical power.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> Reich, 280. "Under Wieck's thorough tutelage, Clara had learned to memorize as a child, and she never found it to be a problem. Reviewers commented on this feat when she was only thirteen..." as was mentioned in my first chapter, page 30.

<sup>209</sup> "[Clara] had previously only risked its Finale in cities of lesser importance." Chissell, 46.

<sup>210</sup> Goehr, 231.

<sup>211</sup> 'Der echte Künstler lebt nur in dem Werke,' from Hoffmann's 'Beethovens Instrumentalmusik,' *Musikalische Novellen und Aufsätze*, I, ed. E. Istel (Regensburg, 1919), 69. Quoted in Goehr, 1.

Ultimately within the notion of *Werktreue*, the act of performance, and performers themselves, are submerged by their absolute identification to the composition and the composer. Eventually, memorization came to be accepted as a manifestation of *Werktreue*, as a sign of the performer's dedicated study and internalization of the score, as an expression of veneration to the canonized work. However, before memorization was established as a manifestation of *Werktreue*, the novelty of memorization called attention to itself and the performer, and the performer risked accusations of sacrificing her artistic integrity for the display of her ability. That may be one of the reasons why Clara's 1837 performance came to be associated so strongly with Bettina's "reputed" remark. In order to understand *Werktreue*, one must understand its context, the German Romantic Idealism and its effects on music and musical experience in nineteenth-century Germany. In this chapter, I posit that the ideal behind the practice of memorization came from the German tradition of *Werktreue*, the ideal of fidelity to the work.

# 1. German Romanticism and Acousmatic Music

Music took on a new seriousness in the eyes of German Romantic philosophers, who recognized its potential to transcend the chasm between one's subjective experience and the objective reality. In his *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), Immanuel Kant proposed that there was a gap between how we perceived the world and how the world really was. It was the biggest challenge to the conventional perspective since Copernicus (1473-1543) proposed that the sun, rather than the earth, was the center of universe.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 22. In the Preface to the second edition of his *Critique to Pure Reason* (1781), Kant refers to Copernicus; "Hitherto it has been assumed that all our knowledge must conform to objects. But all attempts to extend our knowledge of objects by establishing something in regard to them *a priori*,



While philosophical inquiry into the relationship between our subjective experience and the objective reality started with Kant, scientists were also shedding light on this discrepancy. Issac Newton (1643-1727) had already demonstrated that color was a subjective sensation and not inherent to the material or light. Following Newton's work, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) published *Theory of Color* (1810) posing questions about the relationship between the observer's optical experience and the actual world of light and colors.<sup>213</sup> Increasing availability of scientific instruments such as magnifying glasses, telescopes and microscopes made visible the world that was imperceptible to our natural senses. While vision represented our five senses in the early stages of physiological inquiry, hearing was not to come under the same scrutiny until *On the Sensations of Tone* (1863) by Hermann von Helmholtz. Aurality, therefore, retained its mystic capacity for spiritual transcendence for some more decades. In the meantime, philosophers promoted instrumental music as a gateway toward abstraction to transcend the gap between the phenomenal and the noumenal world.<sup>214</sup> And for the time being, the concert audience shut their eyes in hopes of ascendance into this transcendental world.

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by means of concepts, have, on this assumption, ended in failure. We must therefore make trial whether we may not have more success in the tasks of metaphysics, if we suppose that objects must conform to our knowledge. This would agree better with what is desired, namely, that it should be possible to have knowledge of objects *a priori*, determining something in regard to them prior to their being given. We should then be proceeding precisely on the lines of Copernicus' primary hypothesis. Failing of satisfactory progress in explaining the movements of the heavenly bodies on the supposition that they all revolved round the spectator, he tried whether he might not have better success if he made the spectator to revolve and the stars to remain at rest. A similar experiment can be tried in metaphysics, as regards the *intuition* of objects."

<sup>213</sup> Jonathan Crary, "Techniques of the Observer," *October*, 45 (Summer, 1988), 3 [accessed November 17, 2016].

<sup>214</sup> Cvejic, 47.

By shutting their eyes, concert audiences were now willfully turning their concerts into an acousmatic experience. *Acousmata* is sound with an invisible sound source. Its Greek root *akousmatikoi* means listeners or auditors, referring to a group of Pythagorean disciples. It is based on a legend of Pythagoras giving his lectures behind veils. According to the legend, Pythagoras believed that the lack of his visual appearance would communicate the content of his lectures more effectively to his auditors.<sup>215</sup> Thinkers throughout history proved their knowledge of acousmata by demonstration. In the bible, God is often an acoustical presence. In the seventeenth century, pietism “privileged the ear as the pathway to the soul.”<sup>216</sup> Exclusion of vision from the experience of a musical performance also had to do with an aesthetical theory. Aesthetics as a branch of philosophy was established in 1735 as a “science of sensory cognition.”<sup>217</sup> The aesthetic theorists discovered an unreconcilable difference between visually perceived sense of space, and aurally perceived sense of time.<sup>218</sup> This belief led to a theoretical belief in “medium purity, arts that ministered to the strengths and limitations of a single sense being privileged.”<sup>219</sup> While historians have focused primarily on how

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<sup>215</sup> Brian Kane, *Sound Unseen: Acousmatic Sound in Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 4.

<sup>216</sup> Deirdre Loughridge, *Haydn's Sunrise, Beethoven's Shadow: Audiovisual Culture and the Emergence of Musical Romanticism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), 12.

<sup>217</sup> Mark Evan Bonds, *Absolute Music: The History of an Idea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 80.

<sup>218</sup> “Space cannot be turned into time, time into space, the visible into the audible, nor this into the visible; let none take on a foreign field, but let it rule in its own the more powerful, the more certain, the more noble.” Johann Gottfried Herder, “*Kalligone* (1800),” trans. In *Musical Aesthetics: A Historical Reader*, vol. 2: *The Nineteenth Century*, ed. Edward A. Lippman (New York: Pendragon Press, 1988), 41. Quoted in Loughridge, 12.

<sup>219</sup> Loughridge, 12.

listeners' experiences shifted during this period, I would like to assert that performers also responded by eliminating the visual aid, the score, from their musical experience.

Examples of the separation of the senses from this era can be found in producers and composers hiding their instrumentalists and orchestras from the audience. There was a number of proposed, and sometimes realized, architectural designs to conceal the players from the listeners, starting with composer André Grétry's proposal in his *Memoir* (1797) and leading to the famous example of Wagner's theatre in Bayreuth that opened in 1876. The idea caught on after Bayreuth and started a whole concert reform movement. Alexander Choron, a director of the Paris Opera, from 1838, wrote that "the presence of the orchestra, playing in full view...is every bit as disturbing as would be the sight of the back-stage machinery and the stage-hands working away on it."<sup>220</sup> They believed in the power of acousmata.

Recent studies suggest that Pythagoras and followers of his legendary practice would have been right: our physiology respond directly to acousmata. A research finding indicates that our brain adjusts the intake of visual information in order to free the brain space to enhance its aural focus.<sup>221</sup> Another study demonstrates that shutting the eyes enhances the emotional effect of musical stimuli.<sup>222</sup> Elimination of unrelated information

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<sup>220</sup> Kane, 101-2.

<sup>221</sup> W. D. Hairston, Donald A. Hodges, Ramon Casanova, Satoru Hayasaka, Robert Kraft, Joseph A. Maldjian, and Jonathan H. Burdette. "Closing the Mind's Eye: Deactivation of Visual Cortex Related to Auditory Task Difficulty," *Neuroreport* 19, no. 2 (Jan 22, 2008): 151-4, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.rice.edu/docview/70203497?accountid=7064>. [accessed, April 8, 2017]

<sup>222</sup> Yulia Lerner, David Papo, Andrey Zhdanov, Libi Belozersky, and Talma Hendler. "Eyes Wide Shut: Amygdala Mediates Eyes-Closed Effect on Emotional Experience with Music," *PLoS One* 4, no. 7 (July, 2009), <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.rice.edu/docview/1290615796?accountid=7064>. [accessed, April 8, 2017]

and stimuli also allows us to recall memorized information better.<sup>223</sup> In addition to the aesthetical and cognitive inquiries listed thus far, these recent studies reinforce the promotion of the invisible performers at concerts for the audience. They also make for a strong argument for the elimination of the visual representation of the music, the score, for the performers. I rest my argument on the fact that the score is never a perfect representation of the music: a visual representation of organized sound, always fragmented in arbitrary sections divided into multiple pages. The significance here is that it was the aesthetic ideology of nineteenth-century Romanticism that promoted acousmatic musical presentation as necessary to proper, transcendental aesthetical experience. Coincidentally, this was when memorization became a conscious performance practice. Schopenhauer in 1808 wrote, “Music as such knows only the tones or notes, not the causes that produce them.”<sup>224</sup> Assuming that Schopenhauer’s use of the word “notes” is synonymous with his previous word “tones” as in sounding pitch, he is privileging the experience of music as the direct communion with the canonized music over attention to any medium. For a pianist, the medium would be the score, and the direct communion with the music would be achieved through memorization. “Pure will-less knowing” is how Schopenhauer described aesthetic contemplation, supported by “the capacity to remain in a state of pure perception, to lose oneself in perception.”<sup>225</sup> The philosophy of *Werktreue* would hold that the “state of pure perception” would be more

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<sup>223</sup>Annelies Vredeveldt, Graham J. Hitch, and Alan D. Baddeley. "Eyeclosure Helps Memory by Reducing Cognitive Load and Enhancing Visualisation," *Memory & Cognition* 39 (7): 1253-1263 (April, 2011). <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.rice.edu/docview/920258385?accountid=7064>. [Accessed, April 8, 2017]

<sup>224</sup> Quoted in Kane, 99.

<sup>225</sup> Quoted in Kane, 100.

likely be achieved after the pianist successfully internalized the work and was capable of recreating it from memory.

## 2. The Philosophically Sublime

In German Idealism, music became disembodied and abstract as the performers became invisible and performances became acousmatic. *Tonkunst*, the art of sound, is how they referred to their favorite kind of music: artful textless instrumental music. One of the first moments in which the status of instrumental music was elevated is when Edmund Burke's defining *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) pointed to textless instrumental music as an example of sublimity.<sup>226</sup> Opacity, considered to be a deficiency in textless instrumental music until Romanticism, became an asset for the sublime.

German Romantic Idealism thrived on Burke's promotion of the abstract and intangible in music, promoting it as the epitome of sublimity. For Romantic Idealists, instrumental music's most important characteristic was aesthetic autonomy. It meant that aesthetically autonomous works were "subject only to their own rules; exist[ed] only for themselves; and refer[ed] only to themselves."<sup>227</sup> This aesthetic autonomy gained more significance as a temporary refuge – "a utopian symbol of the realization of freedom" – as younger philosophers became increasingly pessimistic about the prospects of

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<sup>226</sup> "[It] is one thing to make an idea clear, and another to make it affecting to the imagination... we have a sufficient proof in the acknowledged and powerful effects of instrumental music. In reality, a great clearness helps but little towards affecting the passions, as it is in some sort an enemy to all enthusiasms whatsoever." Burke, [www.bartleby.com/24/2/](http://www.bartleby.com/24/2/). [accessed, 3/9/2016]

<sup>227</sup> Cvejjic, 50.

individuals becoming free from their subjectivity.<sup>228</sup> *Tonkunst* was aesthetically autonomous, and expressed the ineffable. That meant different things to each of the German Idealists; but overall, they believed that somehow artistic abstraction was a way to fill the chasm, even if temporarily, between our subjective perception and the “truth” in some ways.<sup>229</sup>

Schopenhauer left only two avenues of escape from his subject’s subjectivity: death; and an approximation of death by completely selfless and disinterested absorption in aesthetic contemplation. Using his knowledge of the contemporary scientific, medical and physiological findings, he prescribed ritualistic physical preparation to increase one’s chance of attaining the aesthetic truth. His prescription involved techniques such as “a peaceful night’s sleep, a cold bath, and everything that furnishes brain-activity with an unforced ascendancy by a calming down of the blood circulation and of the passionate nature.”<sup>230</sup>

Schopenhauer’s prescription was most likely inspired by a short story from *Confession and Fantasies* (1787) by Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder (1773-1798).<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> Cvejic, 52.

<sup>229</sup> For more details on German Idealists’ thoughts on the link between philosophical conceptions of music and contemporary thinking on subjectivity, Zarko Cvejic dedicates his first chapter “Music in Philosophy around 1800” to the subject in *The Virtuoso as Subject*.

<sup>230</sup> Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol. II, 367. Quoted in Kane, 101.

<sup>231</sup> “[Wackenroder]...had a deep impact on such other Romantic authors as Ludwig Tieck, Friedrich and August Wilhelm Schlegel, E.T.A. Hoffmann, Achim von Arnim, and Clemens Brentano. Wackenroder’s view of music as the most sublime of the arts and his desire to imitate with words the architectonic structure of symphonic music stands in a close relationship to musical Romanticism... The impact of Wackenroder was most momentous and far-reaching in the realm of the conflict between ‘artist’ and ‘world,’ between ‘art’ and ‘actual life.’” Mary Hurst Schubert, critical introduction to *Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder’s Confession and Fantasies*, trans. Mary Hurst Schubert (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1971), 3-4.

The book containing the novella was found in Schopenhauer's library, after his death.<sup>232</sup> In "The Strange Musical Life of the Musical Artist Joseph Berglinger: In Two Parts," Wackenroder forecasted the elimination of performers and the act of performance from the Romantic Idealists' notion of the transcendental musical experience.<sup>233</sup> The fictional musician Joseph attains the selfless, disinterested absorption in aesthetic contemplation through a self-imposed acousmatic experience at concerts he attends:

Whenever Joseph was at a big concert, he seated himself in a corner, without looking at the brilliant gathering of auditors, and listened with the very same reverence as if he were in church – just as quietly and motionlessly and *with his eyes fixed upon the ground* before him. ...[Throughout the concert, his] continuously active soul was entirely a medley of sounds; - it was as if it were detached from his body and were flitting about more freely, or as if his body had become a part of his soul – his entire being was embraced so freely and easily by the beautiful harmonies...<sup>234</sup>

Throughout the story, Berglinger does not only avoid seeing the performance, but often hearing it. The music transcends him regardless of the performance. When he is starved for this musical transcendence, "even crude players at festivities and annual fairs could, with their wind-instruments, inspire in him feelings about which they themselves had no idea."<sup>235</sup> In his *Sound Unseen*, Brian Kane only associates Joseph's physical preparation to Schopenhauer's prescription for proper listening in Joseph's capacity as a listener.

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<sup>232</sup> David E. Cartwright. *Schopenhauer: A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 109 footnote.

<sup>233</sup> "Schopenhauer's strategy of phantasmagorically deploying and then dismissing bodily techniques after attaining the pure state of aesthetic contemplation has a veritable history. Wackenroder employs bodily techniques for musical phantasmagoria in the final tale of his *Outpourings*, concerning the fictional musician Joseph Berglinger." Kane, 101.

<sup>234</sup> Wackenroder, 149. [emphasis added]

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

However, Wackenroder, who had studied piano and composition,<sup>236</sup> takes the readers to explore musical experience from the performer's perspective in the second half of the novella. Joseph's love of music drives him to run away from home in the second half of the novella to master the music. However, mastering music requires Joseph to transform the subliminal music into a mathematical relationship, and learning the "grammar of art." The knowledge "cages" his soul from flight in music. He becomes a town conductor but finds himself spiritually impotent in his musical experience, in his service to the audience and obedience to the court. The technical understanding of music is presented here as a destruction from spiritual transcendence through contemplation of music's aesthetic autonomy and communion with canonized composers through their canonic works in the spirit of *Werktreue*. The denigration of technical understanding of music is analogous to defamation of virtuosos as seen in chapter two, and the annihilation of act of performance and performers from musical experience as I will further demonstrate in this chapter.

Noticeably missing from the story of Joseph Berglinger is the actual music or the musicians. Despite Joseph's profession, the novella has no mention of the actual music or musicians he is working with in his profession, just as in the first half the story focuses on Joseph's subjective experience of music and does not refer to the instigator of the experience. The example of Joseph, like that of acousmatic concert halls, demonstrates the lack of regard for the act of performance from the musical transcendence. Knowledge of the technicalities of musical composition and performance, and a professional status, demote Berglinger's musical experience from a gateway to transcendence to an everyday

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<sup>236</sup> Peter Branscombe, "Wackenroder, Wilhelm Heinrich," *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/29753>. [accessed, January 15, 2017]



mundane. Berglinger laments of his disillusionment: "...all were based upon a single compelling mathematical law! That, instead of flying freely, I first had to learn to climb about in the awkward scaffolding and cage of the grammar of art! How I had to torment myself in order first to produce a correct work with the ordinary, scientific, mechanical understanding."<sup>237</sup> To obscure the mechanical workings of the actual musical production and to enhance the abstract aspect of instrumental music, Wackenroder and Romantic Idealists like him, devalued the act of performance, and those who engaged in them. The notion of "absolute" music is defined by Bonds as "music's essence as autonomous, self-contained and wholly self-referential."<sup>238</sup> This "essence" precludes the act of performance.

In Romantic Idealism, music became a language that expressed the inexpressible. In fact, according to Friedrich Schlegel (1772-1829), music surpassed the status of art and became "the language of feeling, which agitates consciousness at its source, is the only universal language and the only ideal for any language that would justify itself by acting upon the innermost heart of consciousness."<sup>239</sup> The composer became the sublime oracle that disclosed the ineffable that "demands interpretation." In this picture, where the composer is the oracle and the listener is the interpreter, the performer is demoted to becoming a sound board, a channel, passive and will-less: Should a will-less sound board be reading from the score?

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<sup>237</sup> Wackenroder, 155.

<sup>238</sup> Bonds, 1.

<sup>239</sup> Friedrich Schlegel, *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*, ed. Ernst Behler, vol. 13, *Philosophische Vorlesungen, 1800-1807*, ed. Jean-Jacques Anstett, Munich, Ferdinand Schöningh, 1964, 57-58. Quoted in Bonds, 114.

### 3. Acousmata: Annihilation of Performers

The annihilation of performers and the act of performance from all serious consideration of music was far-reaching and long-lasting. Mainstream musicology remained focused on canonized composers and their works until the last few decades of the twentieth century, neglecting performers, performance practice, and audience reception. Both contemporary writings on music and retrospective musicology insisted on this perspective because the physicality of the performance threatened to unmask the fallacy of aesthetically autonomous artwork.<sup>240</sup> Musicologists focused on contemporary writings by aestheticians that failed “to account for the actualities of performance, which clearly included more interpretative freedom than a modernist model would allow.”<sup>241</sup> The promotion of *Tonkunst* was essentially an elitist idea imposed on the general public as morally righteous.<sup>242</sup> The market was susceptible to such manipulation because “[the] nineteenth-century bourgeoisie was receptive to, sometimes even desperate for, authoritative-sounding voices directing them toward the ‘good’ or the ‘right’ choices in

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<sup>240</sup> Paraphrased in Cvejic, 9 from Susan Bernstein, *Virtuosity of the Nineteenth Century: Performing Music and Language in Heine, Liszt and Baudelaire*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 11, 13-14, and 81.

<sup>241</sup> “In this scholarly context, the apparently diminished role of the performer in musical discourse has typically been a phenomenon to be noted and set aside rather than explored or interrogated in any detail. Once the new aesthetics of music at the turn of the nineteenth century are considered from the perspective of performance, however—that is, partly from the perspective of the performer him- or herself, and partly from the perspective of writers who gave some thought to the role of the performer in the whole music-making nexus—it emerges that there was another kind of discourse about the act of bringing works to life, one in which the performer’s role was considered to demand genius and in which the performer—even, or especially, the interpretative (as opposed to the improvising virtuoso) player—was regarded as a fully-fledged artist on a par with the composer.” Mary Hunter, “To Play as if from the Soul of the Composer”: The Idea of the Performer in Early Romantic Aesthetics,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 58, no. 2 (Summer, 2005), 361.

<sup>242</sup> Dana Gooley, “The Battle Against Instrumental Virtuosity in the Early Nineteenth Century,” in *Franz Liszt and His World*, edited by Christopher H. Gibbs and Dana Gooley (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 76.

music...all the more since music's recent democratization overwhelmed them with products and choices."<sup>243</sup> Performers became increasingly neglected in the process.

Under these conditions, performers were left with little choice but to annihilate themselves if they were to accept this aesthetic philosophy. Joseph Berglinger, to take a literal example, dies at the end of Wackenroder's novella. In reality, no performer on record actually killed himself because of this aesthetic notion, but some came close. Adolf Henselt (1814-1889) "saw in his mind an ideal, which he took it upon himself to pursue...[H]e closed himself completely in his room and lived alone as a resident in his ideal tone pictures, with which he, like a magician, battled in order to control them."<sup>244</sup> He played Bach "ten hours a day on a dummy keyboard (while reading the bible)."<sup>245</sup> His fear of public performance led to him rarely performing at all, despite his achievements at the keyboard "surpassing in the view of critics the achievements of Thalberg and even (in Schumann's opinion) Liszt."<sup>246</sup> He eliminated himself from the concert stage, and for the most part, the history of pianists. Harold Schonberg attributed Henselt's performance anxiety to an anecdote of a memory slip, related by his pupil Alice Mangold Diehl.<sup>247</sup> A

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<sup>243</sup> Gooley, "The Battle Against Instrumental Virtuosity," 105.

<sup>244</sup> August Kahlert. "Adolph Henselt und das moderne Clavierspiel (London / Berlin (Clementi und Nachfolge). Wien / Paris (Hummel und Nachfolge). C. M. v. Weber. Mendelssohn. Chopin. Henselt (Leben. Kompositionen))." *Cäcilia* 20, no. 77 (1839): 57-65. *RIPM - Retrospective Index to Music Periodicals*, EBSCOhost [accessed December 1, 2016], 62-65. Translated and quoted in Gooley, "The Battle Against Instrumental Virtuosity," 108.

<sup>245</sup> Davies, 160. [parenthesis original]

<sup>246</sup> Richard Beattie Davis. "Henselt, Adolf." *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press  
<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/12818> [accessed, January 22, 2017]

<sup>247</sup> "He had a memory lapse, left the stage, and refused to return." Schonberg, 212.

memory slip symbolizes a failure in the performer's attempted communion with the composer. There are catastrophic memory slips, such as the one that traumatized Henselt where he supposedly abandoned the stage in the middle of a performance. Not only do these memory slips devastate the musical transcendence for the audience by violently reminding them of the unromantic reality of human imperfections, but it also expresses the performer's most desperate humility to the aggrandized masterwork. By sabotaging his own elevation through identification with the work and oracle the composer, he demonstrates their unattainability. However, once such an admission is made in front of an audience, how is a performer to return to the stage with confidence? Henselt apparently never did.

The idea of self-negation for a greater purpose was a popular Hegelian thought that resonated with *Werktreue*.<sup>248</sup> In his *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), Hegel argued that the individual can free himself by striving to become a part of a larger entity, resulting in an enhancement of both. Henselt's attempt resulted in a masochistic expression, but a more positive manifestation of this ideology can be found in the Philharmonic Society of London. The Foundation Book (1813) stated its extremely idealistic social values and "serious" musical values. Musically, it was to advocate "the best and the most approved instrumental music, consisting of Full Pieces, Concertantes for not less than three principal instruments, Sextetts, Quintetts, and Trios: *excluding* Concertos, Solos and Duets: and requiring that vocal music, when introduced, shall have full orchestral accompaniments, and shall have the same restrictions."<sup>249</sup> The orchestra

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<sup>248</sup> Goehr, 1.

<sup>249</sup> Cyril Ehrlich, *First Philharmonic: A History of the Royal Philharmonic Society* (Oxford, England: 1995), 4. Quoted in Gooley, "The Battle Against Instrumental Virtuosity," 78.

members had all taken part in determining the rules that governed them. This included elimination of hierarchy among the musicians, musically or financially. The idea was to “integrate themselves into a larger, transcendental whole or body, mirroring the elevated status accorded to the symphony.”<sup>250</sup>

However, the Hegelian ideals upheld by the London Philharmonic Society proved to be not entirely sustainable. The rules eliminating the hierarchies among the orchestra members was changed “within a matter of weeks,” and by 1818 solo concertos were regularly found on the programs.<sup>251</sup> And Henselt, despite his reclusive daily practicing and avoidance of public performance, did leave a legacy as a pianist with a formidable talent. Annihilation of performers by complete absorption into transcendental experience of music was impossible. And their continuous threat to unmask “the pure interiority of the aesthetically autonomous artwork...as a fallacy”<sup>252</sup> increased the tension between the ideal of abstract transcendental music and the necessity of physicality in the realization of music.

*Werktreue* emerged in the midst of this negotiation, emphasizing the receptive aspect of performance. The act of performance in relation to the work entails two dichotomous components: receptive and generative. The receptive aspect of performance is often overlooked, but performers do receive the music from the compositions and composers in order to generate the music for the audience. The concept of *Werktreue*

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<sup>250</sup> Gooley, “The Battle Against Instrumental Virtuosity”, 79

<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

<sup>252</sup> Cvejc, 9. He is paraphrasing Susan Bernstein’s *Virtuosity of the Nineteenth Century*.

affects both, receptive and generative, aspects of performance. *Werktreue*, and Hegel's ideal applied to performances, places an inordinate significance on the receptive aspect of performance. Consequently, it treats the generative aspect as something that should happen almost automatically as a result of the receptive process, minimizing the performer's own unique input. Memorization would be seen as a natural manifestation of rigorous and digestive process of receiving the canon, transcending them to a status of priesthood that are appointed to embody the canon for the duration of a ritual.

#### 4. Inaudible Music: Formalism, Work-Concept and Ritualized Concerts

Through the story of Joseph Berglinger, Wackenroder presented the idea of ineffable transcendence to his readers in words, not music. In German Romantic Idealism, the transcendence to be reached through the ineffable in music were constantly described verbally in manifestly theoretical, ideological terms without referring to actual music or the process of music making. Music increasingly became an unattainable abstract concept, a symbol. The ineffable in music equates to the obscurity in the aesthetic concept of the sublime. The distance between theory and reality creates an anxiety that a gullible individual might associate with the effect of the sublime in *Tonkunst*.

The constant description of the ineffable in music reflects the tension between the desire to understand music and the desire to bask in its intangibility. It reached an apex among the Romantic thinkers.<sup>253</sup> Memorization embodies both sides of this tension. It is

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<sup>253</sup> Kane, 4. The tension reflects the effect of the sublime caused by acousmata. "Because the source of the noises remains obscure, the desire to uncover it generates much of the interest in the sounds themselves. The various effects the noises have [on the listeners are] terror, curiosity, bemusement, awe, theophany, wonder."

an act that demonstrates the performer's dedicated scrutiny necessary to understand the canonized score and master its execution. At the same time, it eliminates the only corporeal representation from the experience of music, forcing it to rely on human generation and reception in real time. The embodiment of the contradiction is one of the ways in which the practice became a significant reflection of the Romantic ideals. That is partially why it started calling attention to itself around the time of Clara's "Appassionata," and Liszt's "recitals." At the same time, however, the tension also shifted the theoretical contemplation away from performers and performance practice in consideration of music. I will examine three main musical theories from the nineteenth century that deepened the chasm between theory and practice, namely formalism, work-concept, and necessity of ritualizing concerts as music was established as a branch of fine arts. The three conditions pressured performers to diminish their roles in the transcendental conception of music. One of the manifestations of this denigration was memorization.

Formalists asserted that the musical form *was* its content. To clarify, I quote Schiller from his *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* (1795):

[Content] should do nothing, the form everything. For it is through form alone that the whole of the human being is affected; content affects only discrete capacities. Thus the content of a work, no matter how sublime or expansive, always affects the *Geist* in a delimiting manner; only through form can we expect true aesthetic freedom. Herein, then, resides the real artistic secret of the master, *that he eradicates the material through form*. And the more imposing, assertive, and seductive the material is in its own right, the more autonomously it promotes its effect, or the more the beholder is inclined to engage with it directly, then all the more triumphant is that art which repels its material and asserts dominion over it.<sup>254</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> Friedrich Schiller, *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen*, (Letter 22) quoted in Bonds, 99. [emphasis original]

Mark Bond's *Absolute Music* traces formalism back to music of the spheres: the idea that the arithmetic ratios of musical intervals reflect the harmony of the universe. Plato credited Pythagoras with the discovery of the arithmetic ratios of consonance, whose ideas were then disseminated through writings of Boethius (ca. 480-ca. 524): "For Plato, no other human endeavor is as deeply embedded in the construction of the universe as music, the most abstract and pure of all the arts, lacking tangible substance."<sup>255</sup> The idea of music of the spheres remained throughout the history of music. Eduard Hanslick attested to the mysterious power of music in the nineteenth century, despite the counter-evidence presented by sixteenth century astronomers such as Copernicus and Galileo Galilei.<sup>256</sup>

However, Hanslick made a radical departure from the Greek harmony of the universe. He declared that the essence of music was unrelated to its effect, whereas the Greeks believed that the universal effect was music's essence.<sup>257</sup> By disconnecting what music *is* from what it *does*, Hanslick deemed music valuable in theory, denigrating the actual experience of music as a secondary by-product. With Hanslick's assertion, the act of performance and the role of performers in the conception of musical transcendence

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<sup>255</sup> Bonds, 8.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid. Bonds demonstrates the inheritance of Pythagorean influence throughout the history of Western music in the fifth chapter "Form" (P. 90-103) of his book *Absolute Music*. Even Hanslick, in his *On the Musically Beautiful* (1854) said "It is not merely and absolutely through its own intrinsic beauty that music affects the listener, but rather at the same time as a sounding image of the great motions of the universe."

<sup>257</sup> Ibid., 9.



was further diminished. In his treatise *Vom Musikalische- Schönen* (The Beautiful in Music, 1854), he made this departure in his assertion of his own version of formalism.

[Music] has no prototype in nature, and expresses no definite conception...Of music it is impossible to form any but a musical conception, and it can be comprehended and enjoyed only in and for itself. The “specifically musical [beauty]” must not, however, be understood only in the sense of acoustic beauty or symmetry of parts – both of which elements it embraces as of secondary importance – ... and in tracing the essential nature of beauty to a morphological source, we wish it to be understood that the intellectual element is most intimately connected with these sonorific forms. ...The forms created by *sound* are not empty; not the envelope enclosing a vacuum, but a well, replete with the living creation of inventive genius.<sup>258</sup>

Privileging theory over practice saw its further manifestation in the so-called work-concept. The work-concept “partitioned [music] into works, each of which embodied and revealed the Infinite or the Beautiful, [and]...contained something valuable, something worthy of aesthetic or ‘metaphysical’ contemplation.”<sup>259</sup> It assigned an imaginary concrete existence to musical works, like paintings or sculpture, thus allowing management of music that some might have equated to understanding. In her seminal work on the topic, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*, Lydia Goehr first introduces the *separability principle* that afforded the conditions necessary for the establishment of the work-concept. For Goehr, the separability principle describes a way of discussing the arts “as separated completely from the world of the ordinary, mundane, and everyday” that emerged at the end of the eighteenth century, following the establishment of aesthetics as a branch of philosophy.<sup>260</sup> Dependent on the separability

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<sup>258</sup> Eduard Hanslick, *The Beautiful in Music: A Contribution to the Revisal of Musical Aesthetics*, trans. Gustav Cohen, Seventh edition (London: Novello, Ewer and Co., 1891), 70 [emphasis original]

<sup>259</sup> Goehr, 174.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid., 157.

principle were the two conditions necessary for the establishment of the work-concept: the establishment of music as a branch of fine art, and the romanticization of fine art that subordinates “all references to occasion, activity, function, or effect to the musical work itself.”<sup>261</sup>

Fine arts are the “arts of beauty” (*les beaux-arts, die schönen Künste*).

Established in the early eighteenth century, the concept tasked its branches (painting, sculpture, architecture, music and poetry) to focus only on aesthetical concerns, separating them from practical functions. Contemplation of beauty had to be done with disinterestedness, without purpose. This disqualified virtuosos like Liszt from becoming an “artist,” for virtuosity was by Metzner’s definition a display of an extraordinary ability for attention at least, if not fame and fortune. Moreover, a performance did not last, or produce a concrete product. In the 1750s, the establishment of fine arts museums throughout Europe guaranteed the sole focus on the aesthetic properties of visual arts “by framing it – either literally or metaphorically – [stripping] it of its local, historical, and worldly origins, even its human origins.”<sup>262</sup> Music found its equivalent in the work-concept by employing the separability principle. Regardless of the inherent contradictions, “[musical] works ... began to be marketed in the same way as other works of fine art and, in aesthetic terms, to be valued and contemplated as permanently existing creations of composers/artists.”<sup>263</sup> The separability principle and the work-concept led to the ritualization of concerts in designated spaces not too dissimilar from museums,

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<sup>261</sup> Goehr, 152.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid., 173.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid., 174.

which furthered the distance between theory and practice. While formalism and the work-concept verbally forced the contemplation of music to become theoretical, ritualization of concerts determined how the performance was to be conducted in ways most conducive to the theories. Concert halls became places of worship. Musical works were canonized. Performers became ritual conductors, priests, and media.

Ritual can be defined in various ways. In social and religious anthropology, Caroline Humphrey and James Laidlaw have argued that “rituals are actions that lack intrinsic and intentional meanings.”<sup>264</sup> Their simple definition echoes Kantian ideas such as “purposiveness without purpose” and “disinterested attention” that Kant deemed intrinsic to proper aesthetic judgement. In communication studies, Eric W. Rothenbuhler defined rituals as “a general human mechanism through which people communicate at a fundamental level, thereby creating a sense of reality. ...the appropriately patterned behavior to symbolically effect or participate in the serious life.” His list of its important characteristics consists of “action, performance, willingness and consciousness, non-instrumentality, non-recreationality, collectiveness, expression of social relations, subjunctive mode of actions (they are about ‘what might be, could be, or ought to be’), effective symbolism, aesthetic behavior, customary behavior (standardization, formality), recurring behavior, communication ‘without information’ and concern with the ‘serious life’.”<sup>265</sup> Cognitive scientist Maurice Bloch’s inquiry into rituals is even

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<sup>264</sup> Caroline Humphrey, and James Alexander Laidlaw, *The Archetypal Actions of Ritual: A Theory of Ritual Illustrated by the Jain Rite of Worship* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994). As paraphrased in Harvey Whitehouse “Emotions, Memory and Religious Rituals” in *Mixed Emotions: Anthropological Studies of Feeling*, ed. Kay Milton and Maruska Svasek (Oxford: Berg, 2005), 91.

<sup>265</sup> Eric W. Rothenbuhler, *Ritual Communication* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1998), 27. Quoted in Ludim Rebecca Pedroza, “The Ritual of Music Contemplation: An Anthropological Study of

more relevant to our musical practice. He says, “[the] ritual actor...is rehearsing stereotyped procedures that have been fixed by others in advance. The hunt for intentional meaning [in the actor] is therefore deflected. Are the participants to look for the intentional origins of the ritual actions...? If so, how far back should they go?”<sup>266</sup>

The above quotes demonstrate undeniable parallels between rituals and what came to be regarded as proper concert behaviors with the dissemination of the work-concept. And the search for the “intentional origins” at these ritualized concerts would not be a means to the end, but an end in itself. Alexander Baumgarten (1714-1762), who established aesthetics as a branch of philosophy in 1735, agreed with his colleagues in that “in the judgement of beauty...the faculties of perception and reason confronted each other most... perfectly.”<sup>267</sup> The perfect harmony of perception and reason, employed in the search of meaning in what is known to be unknowable, would provide a way to the sublime transcendence sought after by the Romantic Idealists.

Rituals are often associated with religion. In the heightened aesthetic contemplation of *Tonkunst* among the German Romantic Idealists, musical discourse resembled a religious one. Religious imageries in ritualized performances abounded. Musical terms from the nineteenth-century, such as canon and canonicity, often have their roots in religion. Clara Wieck-Schumann was often referred to as priestess by her husband Robert, Brahms, Hanslick, Liszt and others, but also as a “prophet,” an “angel,”

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the Solo Piano Recital as Cultural Performative Genre” (Ph.D thesis, Texas Tech University, 2002 (31295017085175), 9-10.

<sup>266</sup> Maurice Bloch, “Ritual and Deference” (2004) as paraphrased in Whitehouse, 92.

<sup>267</sup> Bonds, 80.

and “Saint Cecilia.”<sup>268</sup> As a “priestess” she was “almost always in dark colors.”<sup>269</sup> Eduard Hanslick listed “four true priests of arts” who have made significant contribution to the Viennese concert life after the 1848 Revolution through their “true mission of the virtuoso”: Clara Schumann, Joseph Joachim, Johannes Brahms, and baritone Julius Stockhausen.<sup>270</sup> Dahlhaus described the time period of absolute instrumental music as the “age of ‘art as religion’.”<sup>271</sup> Liszt wrote “Art shall say, ‘Let there be light’,” in an essay that proposed music he called *humanitarian* should unite the theater and the church in an attempt to reach out to people who have forsaken their religious faith.<sup>272</sup> He organized a four-part subscription series of chamber music by Beethoven and other serious composers in Paris in 1837, and called it “Four séances of instrumental music.” One reviewer wrote “to judge from the first séance... the *soirées* to come will be veritable rituals.”<sup>273</sup>

For Harvey Whitehouse, the founder of cognitive science of religion, ritual is a way of transmitting “complex religious knowledge [that requires] special supports for learning and memory.”<sup>274</sup> The “Whitehouse frequency hypothesis” posits that there are

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<sup>268</sup> Stefaniak, 73.

<sup>269</sup> Reich, 152-154.

<sup>270</sup> Eduard Hanslick, *Geschichte des Concertwesens in Wien* (Vienna: Wilhelm Braunmuller, 1869). As translated and quoted in Stefaniak, 195.

<sup>271</sup> Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 92.

<sup>272</sup> Franz Liszt, “Concerning the Situation of Artists and Their Condition in Society.” (1835) as quoted in Weiss and Taruskin, 366.

<sup>273</sup> *Le Monde*, February 5, 1837, 1. Quoted in Dana Gooley, “Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso as Strategist,” in *The Musician as Entrepreneur, 1700-1914: Managers, Charlatans, and Idealists*, ed. William Weber (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 151.

<sup>274</sup> Whitehouse, 103.

two types of rituals: one that relies on frequent repetition that results in rote and/or semantic memory, and the other that relies on the novelty of the occasion associated with emotional and/or physical arousal that leads to episodic memory. In the case of the latter the underlying principle is that “if an experience is novel and emotionally arousing, it will most likely be recalled episodically.”<sup>275</sup> The episodic recall induces “spontaneous exegetical reflection,” a process of long-term rumination.<sup>276</sup> I propose, for the purpose of this thesis, that the point at which musical events become rituals is when the audience members, by becoming quiet, identify themselves as the participants in the ritual-setting. I further posit that the “complex religious knowledge” that the designers of concert-ritual sought to transmit was the German Romantic Idealism, which asserted the supremacy of German art. Lastly, I propose that Beethoven’s music became the arousal-inducing novelty in a low-frequency/high-arousal ritualized concert setting. I will explore these points in the next two sections, and demonstrate how memorization in this context became at least useful, if not yet necessary, to the performance of canonized music by the ritual actor, the pianist.

## 5. Ritualizing Concerts: Silencing the Audience

Silent audiences with their closed eyes give little feedback to the performers. Even the applause become ritualistic and less of a way to validate the performers. By ritualizing concerts, music ceased to become a medium of communication between the

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<sup>275</sup> Whitehouse, 94.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid., 98.

performer and the audience it once was. Instead, the performer became the medium for the canonized musical work. Concert halls became a place where people, both the performers and the audiences, gathered to worship the German Romantic Idealism in its manifestation, the classical, “absolute,”<sup>277</sup> serious music. Silencing the audiences, with their already-closed eyes, facilitated the transcendental musical experience, and diminished the role of the performer in the process of musical conception.

Exactly when the audience became quiet has been a topic of query for some time. James Johnson devotes a chapter to “The Social Roots of Silence” in his *Listening in Paris: A Cultural History* (1995), and points to the 1822 etiquette book by Abel Goujon as the root of “Bourgeois politeness... [that] directed musical responses inward...[and] ...invented boredom.”<sup>278</sup> *The Fall of Public Man* (1974) by Richard Sennett dates the silence to around the 1850s. He holds that didactic reviews by critics like George Grove, Carl Schorske, and Eduard Hanslick were responsible for the recently-urbanized audience falling silent due to the loss of “faith in its own capacity to judge.”<sup>279</sup> Wagner darkened his *Festspielhaus* in Bayreuth to silence his audience. Mark Twain noted how audiences “sit in the dark and worship in silence” in what Bernard Shaw called the “Bayreuth

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<sup>277</sup> Bonds, 1-2. The term, absolute music, was first coined by Wagner in 1846: “[He] used it as a pejorative in his efforts to expose the limitations of purely instrumental music, thereby providing a justification for his own theory of opera. ...it was “absolute” in the sense that it was isolated, sterile, and irrelevant to life. ... Those who considered music to be autonomous and entirely self-referential appropriated the term Wagner had used... The most important figure on this side of the debate was the Viennese music critic Eduard Hanslick, who in his brief treatise *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen* (On the Musically Beautiful, 1854) celebrated precisely those qualities of abstraction and isolation.”

<sup>278</sup> James H. Johnson, *Listening in Paris: A Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 232-236.

<sup>279</sup> Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man: On the Social Psychology of Capitalism* (New York: Random House, 1974), 209.

hush.”<sup>280</sup> Edvard Grieg reported to the Norwegian journal that Wagner posted placards in his Bayreuth theater asking the audience not to applaud during the performance of *Die Walküre* after applause interrupted his *Das Rheingold*. When even the placards failed for his *Ring*, he appeared on stage himself before the premiere of *Parsifal* in 1882 and “begged the public not to applaud.”<sup>281</sup>

Wagner’s various (and comical) efforts in Bayreuth to stop the (already quiet) audience from applauding were attempts at repressing the natural human impulse to participate in the ongoing music making by expressing their reactions. Western classical music has always been an anomaly since the invention of precise notation, but the work-concept and the subsequent enforcement of ritualized, strictly presentational concert setting made it even more distinct.<sup>282</sup> Ritualization made concerts systematized, suppressing spontaneity from both the audience members and the performers. Authoritative figures asserted their dominance over a century before the silence in the concert hall became an expected norm. The attempt had begun with a serious authoritative figure in Vienna, a century earlier than Wagner in Bayreuth. It was Baron Gottfried van Swieten (1733-1803). He “exerted all his influence in the cause of music,

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<sup>280</sup> Ricks, 70-72.

<sup>281</sup> Ibid.

<sup>282</sup> Thomas Turino, *Music as a Social Life: The Politics of Participation*, (2008). As quoted in David A. Camlin, “Whose Quality is it Anyway?: Inhabiting the Creative Tension between Presentational and Participatory Music,” *Journal of Arts & Communities*, 6: 2, 3 (2014): 103 and 99. According to ethnomusicologist Thomas Turino, as quoted by Turino *Presentational Music* is “a field involving one group of people (the artists) providing music for another (the audience) in which there is pronounced artist-audience separation within face-to-face situations”, whereas *Participatory Performance* is “a special type of artistic practice in which there are no artist-audience distinctions, only participants and potential participants performing different roles, and the primary goal is to involve the maximum number of people in some performance role.” Camlin asserts that the traditional hierarchy imposed on these two models by dichotomous positions such as product vs. process, excellence vs. access, and ethical vs. technical are wrong, since they are two different types of music making for different purposes.



even for so subordinate an end as to enforce silence and attention during musical performances. Whenever a whispered conversation arose among the audience, his excellence would rise from his seat in the first row, draw himself up to his full majestic height, measure the offenders with a long, serious look and then very slowly resume his seat.”<sup>283</sup>

Tia DeNora, in her *Beethoven and the Construction of Genius*, credits van Swieten as the promoter of a canonic ideology in Vienna in the last two decades of the eighteenth century. He pioneered new conventions of ritualized concerts in the institutionalized concert halls.<sup>284</sup> From his seven years in Berlin, he had brought back to Vienna J.S. Bach’s keyboard music, Handel’s oratorios, and the notion of creative genius as an embodiment of creative spontaneity with complete rejection of tradition and discipline, based on *Sturm und Drang* ideology. He influenced Mozart and Haydn, and established the *Gesellschaft der Associierten Cavaliere* (GAC), an “association devoted to the private performances of oratorios, mainly by Handel and Haydn.”<sup>285</sup> He helped establish the notion that, for example, the symphonies and oratorios were the only genres that allowed “justification for calling a [large ensemble] concert *great*.”<sup>286</sup> DeNora also

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<sup>283</sup> Otto Jahn, *The Life of Mozart*, vol. 2 (New York, Kalmus. 1992), 385.

<sup>284</sup> Tia DeNora, *Beethoven and the Construction of Genius: Musical Politics in Vienna, 1792-1803* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 27.

<sup>285</sup> “...probably Vienna’s earliest concert organization, the Gesellschaft der Associierten Cavaliere (GAC), or associated knights, which van Swieten founded in 1786 and for which he acted as director,...devoted [itself] to the private performances of oratorios, mainly by Handel and Haydn, which usually were held at Prince Josef Schwarzenberg’s palace.” DeNora, *Beethoven and the Construction of Genius*, 25.

<sup>286</sup> Weber, *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste*, 108. [emphasis original] The quote is of A.B. Marx’s attack in 1825 against Berlin’s central concert series that featured opera excerpts.

asserts that van Swieten exerted significant influence over Beethoven's initial establishment as a creative genius among Viennese old aristocrats, and that Beethoven's music was not the sole motivator for them in their support.<sup>287</sup> What the old aristocrats found motivating in Beethoven, and his "creative genius" style along with the serious music ideology, according to DeNora, was elitism. Culture was the only area in which they could remain authoritative, during the slow and steady decline of their political and economic power.<sup>288</sup>

That the "autonomous art" was used, paradoxically, for social and political agenda has further evidence in the contemporary belief that music enhanced spiritual, social and national moral, and the promotion of its uses in the education system. Our only concern for this, in regard to the consideration of the performance practice of memorization, is how much was at stake in the promotion of serious music for those that actively promoted it, and how inclusive the phenomena was. In her essay "A. B. Marx, Berlin Concert Life, and German National Identity," Sanna Pederson explained the reason behind Germany's national effort to promote their artistic spirituality and cultural superiority by describing the country's slower progress in the areas of politics, technology and economy in comparison to other European countries.<sup>289</sup> In his book

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<sup>287</sup> DeNora, *Beethoven and the Construction of Genius*, 35.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid., 48-50. While clarifying that her "intention is by no means to debunk Beethoven" (xiii) DeNora was provocative and iconoclastic in her sociological examination of Beethoven and his reception. "To suggest that [Beethoven's] success, and the particular configuration of music history to which it gave rise, was the result of his music alone and not of the interaction of that music with its context of reception is to employ a retrospective fallacy: it is to see the events of the past through the wrong end of telescope, accepting the belief that the past inevitably "leads" to present circumstances."188.

<sup>289</sup> Sanna Pederson, "A. B. Marx, Berlin Concert Life, and German National Identity," *19th-Century Music*, (Autumn, 1994), 87. [accessed December 3, 2016]

*Cultivating Music: The Aspirations, Interests, and Limits of German Musical Culture, 1770-1848*, David Gramit demonstrates how for those whose business was in music, the successful promotion of the ideology of serious music, as well as its social, educational and spiritual benefits, determined the degree of their social respectability and job security in the transforming German economic and social systems.<sup>290</sup>

None of the political, social, or personal agendas makes the “complex religious knowledge” that the German Romantic Idealists wished to disseminate through ritualization of concerts any less valid or valuable. In fact, now that we have two centuries between ourselves and the origin of the culture of classical music that we are still devoted to, any human factor that we may discover in its genesis may inspire and refresh our ritual practice. By a critical survey of its historical background, I wish to reevaluate memorization as a potentially more relevant and decisive practice in our contemporary music making, and not a blindly inherited tradition. It is with this in mind that I continue with my query. Why and how Beethoven achieved his canonized status will give us a glimpse into the origin of memorization as a practice.

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Also, in *Schumann's Virtuosity*, Stefaniak asserts: “German nationalists of Schumann’s time envisioned...a “community of mind” or ...a “national spiritual unity” constructed through vibrant participation in the public sphere: Scholarship, literature, journalistic debate, and music, for example. This arena, they believed, was under threat from international commerce and the cosmopolitan aristocracy. They saw commerce and aristocracy as inherently superficial, as networks built on privilege and meretricious self-interest rather than more authentic, inner sources.” 44.

<sup>290</sup> “The cultivated and creasing respectable standing of that public served to confirm the status of music as a contributor to general cultivation, while the distinction between the public and the professional performer (whose technical accomplishments were increasingly necessary) helped secure the economic basis of the field by reducing the status (and hence the prevalence) of concerts of dilettantes.” David Gramit, *Cultivating Music: The Aspirations, Interests, and Limits of German Musical Culture, 1770-1848* (Berkeley: University of California Press. 2002), 26.

## 6. The Usefulness of Beethoven in Thinking about Memorization

Beethoven and the origin of memorization as a decisive musical practice share their time and place. There are two aspects of Beethoven's music, that pressure pianists to memorize his works, and, by extension, other canonical works: the spiritual weight, and the complexity of the score. The former turned memorization into an expression of religious veneration towards the canonized works and their composers. The latter required scrupulous studies and formal analysis to navigate through its complexity so that memorization became one of the natural outcomes. Many of the first examples of memorization in the spirit of *Werktreue* were from German-speaking regions, during Beethoven's lifetime, and of Beethoven's piano works. I will explore the contemporary rhetoric that deified Beethoven and emphasized the spiritual weight of his music. Then, I will demonstrate the difficulty of Beethoven's music by examining the avant-garde qualities in his notation, the contemporary formal analysis of Beethoven's composition, and the notion of "difficulty as an aesthetic principle."<sup>291</sup> Finally, I will explore the less Romantic, less idealistic aspects behind the difficulty in Beethoven's music to demystify Beethoven's canonicity and to reevaluate the power dynamic between composers, canonized works and the performer. It is to pose the question of whether we would continue this inherited practice of memorization, not as an expression of submission or veneration of mythically canonized composers, but for the sake of our artistic integrity.

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<sup>291</sup> Tia DeNora "Embodiment and Opportunity: Bodily Capital, Gender, and Reputation in Beethoven's Vienna" in *The Musician as Entrepreneur, 1700-1914: Managers, Charlatans, and Idealists*, ed. William Weber (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 190. Paraphrasing Elain Sisman from her introduction to *Haydn and His World*, DeNora notes how Beethoven "transformed the decorum of conventional or characteristic formal designs in ways that asserted 'difficulty' as an aesthetic principle."

In Vienna, during Beethoven's lifetime, there were examples of memorization among Beethoven's social circle. Carl Czerny (1791-1857) played the master's op. 13, *Grande sonate pathétique* at his first audition to Beethoven as a ten-year-old. That his audition would have been played most likely from memory has two supports; in Beethoven's testimonial to Czerny's musical memory and Czerny's autobiography. In 1805, Beethoven wrote a testimonial for his fourteen-year-old pupil, attesting to his extraordinary progress on the piano, and "his admirable *memory*" confirming his worthiness in all possible assistance.<sup>292</sup> Czerny's autobiography also refers to how before the age of ten, he was able to play "cleanly and fluently nearly everything written by Mozart, Clementi and other piano composers of the time: owing to my excellent musical memory I mostly performed without music."<sup>293</sup> The same autobiography also mentions Czerny playing for Prince Lichnowsky almost every morning for a few hours in 1804. There, Czerny "played all of Beethoven's compositions, completely and precisely from memory."<sup>294</sup> Another pupil of Beethoven, Ferdinand Ries (1784-1838), was similarly hired as a pianist at the court of Count and Countess Browne-Camus, Beethoven's friends.<sup>295</sup> Being amused by the fact that anything with the name Beethoven seemed to please everyone there, and "tired of *playing from memory*" he improvised a march one

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<sup>292</sup> Ingrid Fuchs, "Carl Czerny: Beethoven's Ambassador Posthumous" in *Beyond the Art of Finger Dexterity: Reassessing Carl Czerny*, ed. David Gramit (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2008), 83. [emphasis added]

<sup>293</sup> Czerny, "Recollections from My Life," 303.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid., 309.

<sup>295</sup> Donald W. MacArdle, "Beethoven and Ferdinand Ries," *Music & Letters*, 42, no. 1 (January, 1965): 24. (accessed July 27, 2016) [emphasis added]

day that would later become his op. 45.<sup>296</sup> More may be added to this short list through studies of pianists around Beethoven, especially among dedicatees of Beethoven's Sonatas and his other pupils.

A search outside Vienna among those who had only a little or no contact with Beethoven would increase the number of accounts of memorization. The accounts are still limited to examples of those who memorized canonic repertoire for their canonicity, under the ideology of German Romantic Idealism. Ignaz Moscheles (1794-1870) idolized Beethoven since he learned the "Pathétique" sonata as a seven-year-old; he then played his "best piece" for his audition to Friedrich Dionys Weber, the future director of the Prague Conservatory, as a ten-year-old.<sup>297</sup> The latter, according to Harold Schonberg, was from memory.<sup>298</sup> It is said that Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) could play all of Beethoven's symphonies at the piano from memory by the time he was eight.<sup>299</sup> In 1818, his sister Fanny Mendelssohn (1805-1847) rendered 24 Preludes from Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* from memory at the age of 13.<sup>300</sup>

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<sup>296</sup> DeNora, *Beethoven and the Construction of Genius*, 186. The incident got a special mention not only because of Ries's ill-fortune in having Beethoven walk in on him, but also because he got his Op. 45 out of it.

<sup>297</sup> Emil F. Smidak, *Isaak-Ignaz Moscheles: The Life of the Composer and His Encounters with Beethoven, Liszt, Chopin and Mendelssohn* (Hampshire: SCOLAR PRESS, 1989), 12. From Moscheles' own unfinished autobiographical account (1814).

<sup>298</sup> Schonberg, 125. Moscheles mentioned the occasion in his autobiography but did not specify that the *Pathétique* was played from memory. Schonberg does not refer to any sources for his account.

<sup>299</sup> Schonberg, 229.

<sup>300</sup> R. Larry Todd. "Mendelssohn, Felix." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/51795pg1>. [accessed July 27, 2016]

The idea that instrumental music embodied German Romantic Idealism was firmly established with the music of Beethoven. This was done with the fervid endorsement by writers on music, who resounded their philosophical colleagues' ideas in their own essays about music. Their writings started to regularly associate Beethoven's music with spirituality, humanity and sublimity partially as an effort to propagate German idealism.<sup>301</sup> Scott Burnham describes how A.B. Marx asserted that through Beethoven's work, music "attained the ability to portray deeply compelling 'soul states' (*Seelezustände*)... Music is thus enabled to give concrete expression to transcendent content...Marx's notion of the poetic *Idee*."<sup>302</sup> E.T.A. Hoffmann, in his famous review of the Fifth Symphony, wrote that Beethoven's instrumental music "open[ed] to us the realm of monstrous and immeasurable...[wielding] the lever of fear, awe, horror and pain...[transporting] the listeners into ever growing climaxes into the spiritual level of the infinite."<sup>303</sup> Roger Lustig asserts that E.T.A. Hoffmann's review of the fifth symphony

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<sup>301</sup> Pederson, "A.B. Marx, Berlin Concert Life, and German National Identity," 87-107.

<sup>302</sup> Scott Burnham, *Beethoven Hero* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 69. Adolf Bernhard Marx (1795-1866) was the head editor to *Berliner allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* from 1824-30, a professor at Berlin University from 1830, and a leading proponent of the form theory that codified the sonata form as a processive entity with organic development through thematic transformation.

In his own words, A.B. Marx states: "Man himself was to become the content of his musical art – and there are many men, not merely an I, but also a You. His feeling was to present itself to his inner intuition – and there are various feelings that exclude each other, making their appearance in isolation, but which, through a psychological, natural, and necessary evolution, can also conjure up a progressive image of life. This happens surely not with the pragmatic certainty of the word (and is even that so certain?), but rather only in flickering outlines and colors, like the reflection of reality in water or in a mirage; yet it is so much more artistic and artistically effective, the confident not of inexorably confining exactitude but of the charming play of fantasy. With this, music took upon itself the twofold task of becoming both dramatic and objective..." A.B. Marx, *Musical Form in the Age of Beethoven: Selected Writings on Theory and Method*, ed. and trans. Scott Burnham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 176.

<sup>303</sup> E.T.A. Hoffmann, "Beethoven's Instrumental-Musik" in *E.T.A. Hoffmanns sämtliche Werk*, vol. 1. 1. ed. C.G. von Maassen (Munich: G. Muller, 1908), trans. Bryan R. Simms, 1. Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann (1776-1822) was a writer of fantasies and music criticism. He was one of the most influential figures among the Romantic generation, and contributed to *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*.

was “the first full expression of the idea of sublime” with the quality associated not with a poetic or programmatic text, but its form.<sup>304</sup> And A.B. Marx was famous for his formal theory.

It was with Beethoven’s music that critics and theorists such as A.B. Marx and E.T.A. Hoffman began to claim that serious music, represented by Beethoven’s, demanded understanding as a whole in order to realize that “every note was essential to the overall design.”<sup>305</sup> This meant that the score had to be studied scrupulously. With this assumption, a piece of music could no longer be understood in a linear listening, passively following its temporal unfolding. It had to be studied in its entirety and understood as a structural entity before each note and detail could be understood as a part of the whole. In a performance of canonized works, the score now had to be recreated faithfully. A note added, subtracted, or missed would change the entire piece, destroying its perfection. A pianist would be under an enormous pressure to grasp the piece in its entirety in addition to delivering it perfectly note for note.

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<sup>304</sup> Roger Lustig, translator’s introduction to *The Idea of Absolute Music*, by Carl Dahlhaus (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), viii.

<sup>305</sup> Quoted in Burnham, *Beethoven Hero*, 67. The form was of special importance to Marx in the age of Beethoven. He considered form, for a genius, to not be formulaic. “Forms must change!” he exclaimed, “...the opposite is stagnation...death. ....those wretched mediocrities [carry] forms around like so many cocoons from which the butterfly, Spirit, has flown?[sic] They trouble themselves in vain to fill the fragile husk the new life; thus affixed to the dead...” (A.B. Marx “Form in Music” Musical From in the Age of Beethoven: Selected Writings on Theory and Method, ed and trans. Scott Burnham, Cambridge, UK. Cambridge University Press, 1997. P. 58) Scott Burnham, in his *Beethoven Hero*, states that it was in the topic of form that “musical thinkers like E.T.A. Hoffmann and A.B. Marx could begin to make the same claims for musical works that had been made by leading romantic critics for the literary works of authors such as Shakespeare and Goethe.” Sonata form became a vehicle for the processive and organic development of motives and themes that allowed for a new aesthetic ideal of unity and integration of diversity.



Beethoven's music was serious and *avant-garde* even from the very first of his publications. Already in the 1790s several differences were observed between Beethoven's compositions and his contemporaries.<sup>306</sup> They were bigger in a number of ways: the pieces were often longer, with more notes that resulted in thicker texture, and with wider dynamic range from the soft to the loud with sudden dramatic changes. The structural organization was more adventurous with melodies and harmonies that often defied the conventional formulas and periodicities.<sup>307</sup> These differences made the experience of Beethoven's music difficult for the listeners and players. It satisfied their aspiration for *Bildung* – German spirit of self-cultivation. They strived to understand music that did not try to be communicative in a conventional sense. Works now made demands on those who experienced them, instead of the other way around.<sup>308</sup> Pianists dedicated to Beethoven welcomed the challenge. The difficulty in executing his score was never for the sake of spectacle-making, but always integral to the spirit of his composition.

Performers are responsible for a note-by-note accurate delivery of music. Naturally, his focus tends to be more on the moment-to-moment unfolding of music. Marx warned against performers' tendencies to overlook form "in their constant oversensitivity and

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<sup>306</sup> Burnham, *Beethoven Hero*, 63-64. Paraphrasing James Webster, Burnham notes that "many of the important musical values we associate with Beethoven, including the liberation of thematic development, destabilized openings, teleological process, and general rhetorical impulse, actually originate with Haydn....[However, one] feels that there is more at stake in Beethoven's use of these shared features; heavier issues are set in motion and brought to a less equivocal conclusion..."

<sup>307</sup> DeNora, *Beethoven and the Construction of Genius*, 129.

<sup>308</sup> A.B. Marx "Über die Anforde[r]ung unserer Zeit an musikalische Kritik (Concerning the demands of our age on music criticism)" as paraphrased in Scott Burnham's "Criticism, Faith and the 'Idee': A.B. Marx's Early Reception of Beethoven," *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 13 no. 3 (Spring, 1990), 184.

emotional excitement, as well as in the swirling pressures of all their own concerns.”<sup>309</sup> In his *Anleitung zur vortrag Beethovenscher Klavierwerke*, Marx advised his readers that in order to grasp Beethoven’s spirit and then to represent it through performance, one must liberate himself from regulations and authority, and from “an uncultivated subjectivity left at the mercy of its own moods and insights.”<sup>310</sup> This was to be done through theoretical knowledge and reason. He wrote: “the work of art cannot and should not be communicated literally but rather illuminated from within its inner essence. ...[The] spirit of the performer should be elevated to the work of art and strengthened to enable its appreciation.”<sup>311</sup> Such elevation of spirit is more likely to happen in a trance-like state of immersion in the canonized work. That state would be more easily achievable with eyes closed, without having to scrutinize the great score on the stand in the midst of rendering it. However, according to Marx, a performer’s elevation could not happen through any amount of dedicated practice or change in performance practices. The elevation of the performer was to happen through words of people like Marx “integrating the discourse of aesthetics and analysis.”<sup>312</sup>

Marx asserted that in order to appreciate serious music, especially of Beethoven’s, one had to study composition. He insisted that “a more deeply secure comprehension and understanding of musical art” would lead to “lasting and continually effective acquisition

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<sup>309</sup> A.B. Marx, *Musical Form in the Age of Beethoven*, 55.

<sup>310</sup> Leon Botstein, “Listening through Reading: Musical Literacy and the Concert Audience,” *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 16, no. 2 Music in Its Social Contexts (Autumn, 1992), 139.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid.

<sup>312</sup> Ibid.

of music's spiritual content."<sup>313</sup> "More deeply secure comprehension" would also yield natural memorization. However, the tradition of memorizing Beethoven's music started not entirely out of the spirit of Hegelian *Werktreue* or the attitude of reverence toward the canonized Beethoven, but also because of the technical challenges Beethoven imposed in mastering his intentionally unconventional musical language.

The "creative genius" that the traditional historical narrative has assigned to the unconventionality in Beethoven's music may have been due to the composer's lack of understanding of convention. His unconventionality led to the complexity of his music and notation, which necessitated memorization in the process of deciphering Beethoven's intent. For example, an anecdote of Beethoven's counterpoint assignment from Haydn, left incomplete and full of mistakes after six months, tells us that Beethoven apparently could not write counterpoint according to its basic rules.<sup>314</sup> Much later, an episode of Beethoven portrays him defensively justifying his earlier composition against his pupil's discovery of a parallel fifth in the work.<sup>315</sup> He dismissed counterpoint as irrelevant and anachronistic. A.B. Marx quoted Beethoven in his compositional treatise: "let them bite into the sour apple of your misguided counterpoint exercises, ...toil themselves to death

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<sup>313</sup> A.B. Marx, *Musical Form in the Age of Beethoven*, 25-6.

<sup>314</sup> DeNora, *Beethoven and the Construction of Genius*, 104. A composer in Vienna, Johann Schenk passed down a story of Beethoven's six-month-old counterpoint homework assigned by Haydn. Schenk found it on Beethoven's desk, incomplete and full of mistakes. "Since I was now convinced that my pupil was ignorant of the primary rules of counterpoint," he presented Beethoven with Fux's textbook and offer to help him in secret. DeNora devotes a page to examine Schenk's motivation and accountability. There are some doubts. But whether the story was true or not, it seems that the homework in question is in physical existence with mistakes.

<sup>315</sup> Goehr, 221. Ries found a parallel fifth in "one of [Beethoven's] earlier violin quartets in C minor." Beethoven first denied that they were in fact fifths, and when he realized that Ries was right, asked who forbade them. To Ries's list of theorists, he replied "And so I allow them!" [emphasis original]

with the wearying pas de deux of your two-voice fugues with which you embitter from the outset one of the most profound and most fruitful form of musical art.”<sup>316</sup> A.B. Marx interprets Beethoven’s quote favorably as a sign of his creative genius. However, the claim of originality, and dismissal of old rules, could also have been cover-ups for his own short-comings.

Whether Beethoven’s unconventionality was due to his creative genius or lack of fundamental understanding, it requires a commitment from those who try to understand it. In reading sentences in a language that one is fluent in, the understanding of syntax and grammar allows us to expect certain words and sentence structure. The same holds true for reading music that follows certain basic conventions. However, when the rules of syntax and grammar are broken, as in a line from a play belonging to the Theater of the Absurd, no word can be taken for granted. Every decision on the most appropriate and effective articulations, inflections and emphasis for every word becomes a matter of interpretation. The same is true in music like Beethoven’s. It is in this interpretative process that the reciter might end up naturally committing the lines to memory, because of the dedication, time and scrutiny these unconventional sentence structures demand of their readers. And the later his work, the harder it becomes to interpret and execute. As though to preoccupy his pianists and audience, and to promote his creative genius, Beethoven kept increasing his demands on his musicians as he developed his later style. One would only need to look at the impossible tempo markings and the unruly fugues in *Hammerklavier*, op. 106 (1818) to know the extent of his demands. Meeting its challenge

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<sup>316</sup> A.B. Marx, *Musical Form in the Age of Beethoven*, 22.

has distracted us for so long from a valid and fundamental question of whether the demands were reasonable.

I also posit the possibility that his stylistic development, and especially his “difficulty as an aesthetic principle” may have been a result of the influence by the reviewers. In *Beethoven’s Critics*, Robin Wallace demonstrates the composer’s interaction with his reviewers and how they influenced each other. After a series of unfavorable reviews to his compositions by the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, Beethoven wrote to Breitkopf und Härtel, the publisher of the music periodical and some of Beethoven’s major works. Beethoven blackmailed the publisher by hinting his thoughts of sending his most recent works to other publishers, and by the way, “[advise] your critics to exercise more care and good sense with regard to the productions of young authors, for many a one may thereby become dispirited, who otherwise might have risen to higher things ....the outcry of your critics against me were so humiliating.”<sup>317</sup> The letter, and Wallace’s extensive examination on Beethoven’s exchanges with his various reviewers through the course of his life, attest to Beethoven exerting his influence over his reception, and vice versa. This would lead us to entertain the possibility that his esoteric late period may have been a result of the reception to his works, and not solely the product of the Romantic notion of aesthetic autonomy in music.

The reviewers’ accountability comes into question, too. Is anyone capable of judging Beethoven? Besides the conflict of interest (of publishers publishing reviews of works by their clients), even on purely qualitative basis, their integrity may be

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<sup>317</sup> Robin Wallace, *Beethoven’s Critics: Aesthetic Dilemmas and Resolutions during the Composer’s Lifetime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 9.

questioned. What objective criteria did they have to judge a piece of music, especially of an *avant-garde* style? An application of musical analysis fails as a way to form objective judgement on Beethoven's music, because many methods of analysis available then, such as one proposed by Marx, used Beethoven's music as the ideal model for their analysis.<sup>318</sup> And theorists may be biased as well. Scott Burnham, after his extensive work on A.B. Marx and his reception of Beethoven, questions his subject's accountability in his article, "Criticism, Faith and the '*Idee*': A.B. Marx's Early Reception of Beethoven" (1990). Burnham points to Marx's inability to define one of his central ideas, *Idee*, and focuses on his contradictory use of the term in different contexts. He also indicates that although many of Marx's ideas are traceable to the contemporary philosophers, he may not have had an original interpretation or possibly even a proper understanding of their positions. Lastly, Burnham implies that Marx may have asserted the importance of musical understanding in its totality because he lacked the appropriate means of analyzing the mechanical details of compositions. He concludes his article with the following:

When understood as a comprehensive response to the music of Beethoven, Marx's aesthetics gain great significance, for he was the first to develop a critical approach to music based on a faith in the unerring coherence and spiritual elevation of Beethoven's masterworks, a faith we share today. To question Marx's reception of this music is to question the roots of our own engagement with Beethoven. For we, like - Marx, want to believe.<sup>319</sup>

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<sup>318</sup> Burnham, *Beethoven Hero*, Chapter 3 "Institutional Values: Beethoven and the Theorists," 66-112.

<sup>319</sup> Burnham, "Criticism, Faith and the '*Idee*'", *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 13 no. 3 (Spring, 1990), 183-192.

Memorized performance has come to embody such faithful devotion. Marx, who attested to zealously memorizing the most popular dramas of Schiller as a child in his memoir, instructed his readers on the importance of immersing one's whole self in totality to properly appreciate an artwork.<sup>320</sup> And our contemplation, mine as well as Scott Burnham's, A.B. Marx's and all the others', just may be a "spontaneous exegetical reflection," a process of long-term rumination as a result of the arousal caused by Beethoven's novelty in Whitehouse's low-frequency/high-arousal ritual model.

## 7. The Gray Area of Historical Memorization

It is undeniable that the practice of memorization became increasingly enforced as the idea of *Werktreue* became more integrated into piano pedagogy. Scholarly research on when memorization became a requirement at different auditions and competitions would extend our understanding further. Whatever the further findings may be, we already know that these phenomena did not happen overnight, and there are always contrasting opinions throughout such developments. In fact, it seems that the practice did not become a general expectation by the audience until much further into the twentieth century than we would think. Anton Rubinstein (1829-1894), Hans von Bülow (1830-1894), Arthur Friedman (1859-1932) and others were able to perform solo recitals that would last for three hours, because memorization was not an absolute requirement.<sup>321</sup> An

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<sup>320</sup> Burnham, "Criticism, Faith and the 'Idee'", 191.

<sup>321</sup> Hamilton, "The Virtuoso Tradition," 66. Anton Rubinstein insisted that because "the public has always been accustomed to see me play without notes" he would keep playing from memory, despite the fear of forgetting. Hans von Bülow was famous for his musical memory and insisted that "no one could call himself an artist who did not have at least 20 pieces firmly fixed in the memory" but felt free to use the score in performances when he felt so inclined.

Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, 73-74.

article from 1915 states how memorization at public concerts have come to be taken for granted “so much so in fact that to have seen Vladimir de Pachmann with the notes of the Chopin F Minor Concerto in front of him on the music-rack, or the late Raoul Pugno tripping gaily out onto the platform with the music of the Italian Concerto in his hand, was to have experienced a slight shock to one’s accustomed sense of the fitness of things.”<sup>322</sup>

History is never truly neat or linear, and a pianist with exceptional musical memory might promote the use of the score on some occasions. When Charles Halle (1819-1895) played a series of recitals featuring the Beethoven cycle in 1861, he received a review commenting unfavorably on the fact that he played from memory. From the third recital on, he put the music on the stand. That same Charles Halle, who was capable of memorizing 32 Beethoven Sonatas on top of all 48 *Well-Tempered Clavier*, invented an automatic page-turning machine, and sometimes used it himself.<sup>323</sup>

Franz Liszt is considered by many to be one of the pianists that started the practice of memorization. As I have shown, there were many others before him. However, many accounts of him using the score for a variety of reasons throughout his life may still surprise many readers. A review from March 1824 reports that the twelve-year-old Liszt “...scarcely looked at his notes, and then only at long intervals. His eyes wandered continually round the hall, and he greeted the persons he recognized in the

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<sup>322</sup> Edwin Hughes, “Musical Memory in Piano Playing and Piano Study” *The Musical Quarterly*, 1 no. 4 (October, 1915), 592.

<sup>323</sup> Arthur Loesser, *Men, Women and Pianos: A Social History* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), 406. Charles Halle, who had a patent on his invention, “was observed using a foot-operated page-turning mechanism in a concert he gave some time during the 1860s.” The author continues by noting that “it is remarkable that so seemingly useful an object should never have found more general acceptance.” I suggest that this had to do with the promotion of memorization.



boxes with friendly smiles and nods.”<sup>324</sup> When he was older, Liszt did play things like the “Moonlight” Sonata and the “Emperor” Concerto from memory but his central repertoire was rather limited and it was a “far cry from the level usually expected today and hardly deserving of the stunned astonishment of some of his biographers.”<sup>325</sup> Liszt made a show of it with or without the score. Kenneth Hamilton tells us that Liszt used a score when he wanted his compositions to be taken seriously.<sup>326</sup> Despite the fact that Hamilton’s source, William Mason’s *Memories of a Musical Life* (1902) is unconvincing,<sup>327</sup> it does pose a question on the association between the elimination of the score from a performance and the notion of *Werktreue*.

Liszt’s teacher, Carl Czerny, also presents a confusing case. Although his musical memory was noted by many, as a pedagogue he was not consistent on where he stood on the issue. This may have been because he inherited Beethoven’s initial weariness when considering young Czerny’s memorization that by memorizing he may “lose the quick grasp, the sight reading, and now and then even the proper emphasis.”<sup>328</sup> Beethoven

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<sup>324</sup> A review by A. Martainviell in *Le Drapeau Blanc* (March 9, 1824), quoted in Walker, 100.

<sup>325</sup> Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, 76.

<sup>326</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>327</sup> William Mason, *Memories of a Musical Life* (New York: The Century, Co., 1901), 118-9. Mason’s account reads “In his concertizing days Liszt always played without the music before him, although this was not the usual custom of his time; ... Later on he very rarely played even his own compositions without having the music before him, and during most of the time I was there copies of his later publications were always lying on the piano, and among them a copy of the “Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude,” which Liszt had used so many times when playing to his guests that it became associated with memories of Berlioz, Rubinstein, Vieuxtemps, Wieniawski, Joachim, and our immediate circle.” Mason’s account is a hearsay. Its accountability is unverifiable. And nowhere in Mason’s account does it imply that Liszt used his score to play to his guests in order to legitimize his written composition. Liszt may very well have had the intent that Hamilton describes. However, Hamilton’s sentence, quoted most recently by Stefaniak in his *Schumann’s Virtuosity*, misrepresent the original source.

<sup>328</sup> Carl Czerny, *On the Proper Performance of All Beethoven’s Works for the Piano*, ed. Paul Badura-Skoda (Vienna: Universal, 1970), 22. Quoted in George Barth “Carl Czerny and Musical

himself performed a Mozart concerto from the score for a benefit concert. Anton Reicha related to us the story of running back and forth between turning the pages for the master and taking care of the strings he would break in the course of his impassioned playing.<sup>329</sup>

What Beethoven cared the most about was the faithful recreation of the score, with or without the print on the stand during a performance. An incident taught young Czerny not to change a note of what Beethoven wrote. In his *On the Proper Performance of All Beethoven's Works for the Piano*, Czerny recalled an incident from his twenties, playing the Quintet for Piano and Winds at a concert:

[With] the frivolity of youth, I took the liberty of complicating the passage work, of using the higher octaves, etc. Beethoven rightly reproached me severely for it, in front of Schuppanzigh [the presenter of the concert and a violinist], Linke and other players. The next day I got the following letter from him... "I simply lost control yesterday, and I was sorry about it as soon as it happened. But you must forgive it from a composer who would rather have heard his work as it is written, as lovely as your playing otherwise was. However, I will make loud amends for it when the Violoncello Sonata's turn comes. Be assured that I have the greatest goodwill towards you as an artist, and will try to attest to that always. Your true friend, Beethoven."<sup>330</sup>

Czerny concluded this anecdote by stating that "this letter cured me of the craze for taking liberties of any kind when performing his work, and I wish it would have the same effect on all pianists."<sup>331</sup> The real question would be whether memorization would be of more service, or disservice, to the faithful recreation. Where Czerny stood on this is

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Authority: Locating the 'Primary Vessel' of the Musical Tradition" in *Beyond the Art of Finger Dexterity: Reassessing Carl Czerny*, ed. David Gramit (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2008), 138. Despite the initial worries, however, by the end of 1805 Beethoven was "completely won over, and signed a testimonial praising Czerny for his 'admirable musical memory'."

<sup>329</sup> Schonberg, 81.

<sup>330</sup> As quoted in James Parakilas "Playing Beethoven His Way: Czerny and the Canonization of Performance Practice" in *Beyond the Art of Finger Dexterity*, 111.

<sup>331</sup> As quoted in Parakilas "Playing Beethoven His Way," 111.

unclear. In his *Piano Forte School*, op. 500 he recommended that in a big hall a pianist should play from memory. But in the same book he indicated that a page-turner was to sit to the left side of the pianist. Whichever side Czerny stood on, eventually memorization became the proper way of venerating the canonized score.

The focus was on the spirit of *Werktreue* until memorization became an automatic expectation and replaced the discourse on *Werktreue*. It was as though the physical demonstration of memorization sufficed as a testament to the performer's attitude of *Werktreue*. However, with the different types of learning we now know to exist with different personality types, it makes sense that some pianists would find the presence of the score inspiring, while other pianists might identify with the canonized composition and the composer better without the limited representation on a printed page. Why it became a rigidly imposed, institutionalized requirement in piano pedagogy reflects on how blindly we inherited the German Romantic Idealism in our performance practice. But perhaps the practice of memorization won over the use of the score, because it represented precisely this blind obedience and unquestioning submission: an ideal attitude they would have expected their women to have for their men. It may not be purely coincidental that the rise of female pianists as the recreators of canonic works and as the embodiment of the concept of *Werktreue* happened around the same time. Clara Schumann's gender may have been a significant factor in her dominant role in the establishment of memorization as a required performance practice for pianists.

When the Romantic Idealists considered their subjects' emancipation through transcendence in aesthetic contemplation, they only had men in mind. They considered

women simply incapable of escaping their own subjectivity.<sup>332</sup> In fact, women were considered incapable of many things, including understanding Beethoven. On the other hand, the separation and hierarchization of labor between the creative act of composition and subordinate, recreative act of performance gave women a loophole in the world of professional music making, on the concert stage. There was a rise of professional female pianists, and gendering of repertoire, during the nineteenth century.<sup>333</sup> In this context, Clara Schumann ended up in a unique position. With a background as a celebrated child prodigy, and solid fundamental understanding of music and career management, she sustained her childhood celebrity as a pianist to her last concert in 1891. In addition, as Robert Schumann's widow and an advocate of her husband's work after his tragic death, she became the epitome of *Werktreue*. She exuded significant influence over the canon formation. Through an examination of her career with our attention on memorization, we will consider women in music, *Werktreue* and canon formation for the rest of this chapter.

## 8. In the Spirit of *Werktreue*: Clara's Place was in Front of the Piano

Why did Clara's 1837 memorized performance of Beethoven's "Appassionata" Sonata in F minor become so historically significant? There are several possible reasons. The fact that Clara played all three movements of a major Beethoven Sonata in a public concert for the first time was noteworthy. It was not just for its novelty, but for

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<sup>332</sup> "Hegel explicitly reserves real, 'actual' subjectivity for men." Cvejic, 15.

<sup>333</sup> Katharine Ellis, "Female Pianists and Their Male Critics in Nineteenth-Century Paris" *Journal of the American Musicological Society*. 50 no.2/3 (Summer-Autumn, 1997), 353-385.

foreshadowing A.B. Marx's formalist assertion that a part of music can only be understood when the piece is considered in its entirety. Beethoven's Op. 57 sonata was a particularly sublime and heroic composition by a composer that was considered to have masculinized music, Beethoven. This was the first major concert in which she was seen as an embodiment of the feminine spirit of *Werktreue*, submissive to the masculine canonized composer. It was a role that she would later assume as a wife to Robert Schumann. Lastly, these concerts in Berlin were Clara's first major concerts where her program consisted almost entirely of canons, and "Appassionata" was the most substantial, most canonic "center piece."

The fact that Clara Schumann played the entire three movements of a sonata was noteworthy for the time. The notion that the understanding of each musical detail depended on one's understanding of the entire piece made it necessary to present all of its movements. The first volume of A.B. Marx's theoretical treatise, *Die Lehre von der musikalischen Komposition, praktisch-theoretisch* included this notion and was published in the same year as Clara's "Appassionata" performance. Marx's treatise itself could not yet have been known to Clara in 1837. However, the Romantic ideal behind Marx's assertion would have been obvious from his, and his associates', other published writings.<sup>334</sup> The reviews of new works were often done from the score, as was the case, for example, for the famous review on Beethoven's fifth symphony by E.T.A. Hoffmann. One of the criteria of judgements for a new work included how each movement fit into

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<sup>334</sup> We tend to apply our contemporary standards of publications, and assume that periodicals were widely and generally read. However, none of the subscriptions to each periodical in Germany exceeded a thousand at this time. Even though businesses like a "reading room" made a copy available for consumption by multiple readers cheaper, we cannot assume the published ideas became common knowledge right away. Friedrich Wieck, in fact, owned a reading room as his business in Leipzig.

the multi-movement arch.<sup>335</sup> In fact, A.B. Marx posited that a work should be performed multiple times, because following a temporal unfolding of a piece once would not allow the listener to contemplate on this aspect of music. This was to be accomplished, eventually, by the formation of the canon.<sup>336</sup>

Of all forms to understand and execute, it was the form of all forms: the sonata form. The importance of sonata form and its association with what Beethoven cannot be overstated. In his *Beethoven Hero*, Scott Burnham emphasizes the significance of the Beethovenian heroic-style sonata that eventually became established “more as an ethos than as a method.”<sup>337</sup> It became a quintessentially German Romantic form, so much so that it was assigned social implications by theorists. The association of the first theme with masculinity and authority with its confirmation of the key, and the contrasting second theme in less stable key to femininity and subordination was an idea first posited by A.B. Marx in his *Die Lehre von der musikalischen Komposition, praktisch-theoretisch*.<sup>338</sup> For its willful development inherent to the form, its increasing size, and its association, it came to be regarded more in the realm of masculinity. Until 1840, when she performed Robert Schumann’s Sonata in G minor, “Appassionata” was to remain the

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<sup>335</sup> Wallace, 9. For example, *Pathétique* received an extraordinarily favorable review partially due to the third movement recapturing the mood of the first movement.

<sup>336</sup> “As late as 1848, according to Christoph Mahling, the concert season included fifty-three performances of Beethoven symphonies, fifty-six performances of symphonies by Haydn and Mozart, and only three performances of new symphonies.... Marx argued that the symphonies and string quartets of the classical masters should be treated as what I am calling composer’s music: they should be presented as complete and continuous wholes and should be performed frequently enough so that musicians and audiences could become familiar with them.” Ferris, 358.

<sup>337</sup> Burnham, *Beethoven Hero*, 156.

<sup>338</sup> Citron, 132-145.

only sonata that Clara would perform in public.<sup>339</sup> This was consistent with the fact that most of the repertoire she performed up to 1837 were variations, fantasies, and dances in ABA form. Although she had already played many pieces that were in sonata-allegro form, they were not called “sonata.”<sup>340</sup> Like the philosophical notion of “form as content,” a “Sonata” with its form serving as its title may have represented something to her public, and even possibly symbolically, to her.<sup>341</sup>

A.B. Marx also insisted that one must study composition to have a true understanding of music. However, neither compositional nor theoretical studies were made available to most women at this time. Women were systematically excluded from classes such as counterpoint, advanced theory and composition.<sup>342</sup> The fact that thinkers of the time, including Marx, considered it favorable for women to have lessons in singing, piano or the like, had nothing to do with their own spiritual transcendence. They meant to equip women with the capabilities of providing music and music education for their male family members and offspring. Piano playing, for the people of this time, was like cooking. All girls were expected to learn to cook, but the few exceptional boys with interests were the ones to make a profession, and possibly an art, out of it. But everyone needed music, just as they needed food. Presented by a spiritually transcended artist or

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<sup>339</sup> Ferris, 387.

<sup>340</sup> By 1837, she had already performed Chopin Concerto No. 1, Robert Schumann’s *Toccata*, and other major works of similar scale in sonata form.

<sup>341</sup> She had also already composed her Piano Concerto in A minor, op. 7 in 1835, but it is not in sonata-allegro form.

<sup>342</sup> Citron, 59-60. Citron lists number of examples where women were barred from score-reading, “anything more than an elementary harmony” and composition classes at music conservatories. Even outside institutionalized settings like a conservatory or university, they faced a difficult time finding a willing teacher.

the women in your household did not change the nourishment derived from the offering. A Hegelian music critic who contributed to *Neue Zeitschrift*, Eduard Krüger described a five-year-old reading from the Bible: “however halting and uncomprehending the delivery, ‘you feel warmed because...the godly content is indestructible.’”<sup>343</sup>

Clara’s music education, however, was designed by her father to make a professional out of her from the beginning. In fact, the education she received was probably superior to almost all men’s in her generation, including Robert Schumann and Johannes Brahms. As we saw in the first chapter, her father applied all of his pedagogical and musical wisdom to Clara’s education. She already had a significant compositional output by 1837.<sup>344</sup> If the study of composition – and not gender reassignment – was the prerequisite to understand music, she had certainly met it. And is there a better way to demonstrate her understanding, both of details and their function as “seeds” to the organic development to the entity of “Appassionata,” than to present it from memory? She did not mean for her memorization to be a demonstration of her abilities or to fulfill an agenda, but it worked. Otherwise, we would not associate her, or this particular performance by her, so tightly with the establishment of the practice. Moreover, of all of Beethoven’s piano sonatas, Clara performed the “Appassionata,” Beethoven’s Op. 57. Perhaps the nickname by the publisher stuck because it does reflect an aspect of its extreme turmoil as “the archetypal example of Beethoven’s heroic style.”<sup>345</sup> Inserted

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<sup>343</sup> Stefaniak, 168.

<sup>344</sup> Citron, 56. Clara later negatively commented on her work. For example, about her G minor Trio, op. 17 (1846) she said: “naturally, it is still a women’s work, which always lacks force and occasionally invention,” and a year later on the same composition “sounded quite effeminate and sentimental.”

<sup>345</sup> Rosen, 192.



between the most intense and volatile outer movements is a movement that D.F. Tovey described as “sublime inaction.”<sup>346</sup> Beethoven had come to personify both masculinity and sublimity in the development of German Romantic Idealism. And the sublime was “a quintessentially masculine category [that] relegated women to the merely beautiful.”<sup>347</sup>

How masculine, and therefore unfeminine, Beethoven was considered to be has been demonstrated from different angles by Tia DeNora in her research.<sup>348</sup> To paraphrase her work, for one, the physicality his work demanded of his pianists turned piano playing unseemly for women. The piano was one of the only instruments that did not involve distortion of face (as required by wind instruments) or body (all others). Traditionally, it allowed the pianists to sit up straight with relatively little motions in the upper body. Beethoven’s writing changed that. His pieces demanded a far more extensive physical involvement in the art of piano playing with extreme dynamics including sudden outbursts, rigorous repeated notes and chords, as well as sudden shifts between extreme registers.<sup>349</sup> In fact, few women performed Beethoven. DeNora’s study of extant program

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<sup>346</sup> Donald Francis Tovey, *Concertos and Choral Works: Selections from Essays in Musical Analysis*, vol. 3 (New York: Dover Publications, 2015), 76.

<sup>347</sup> Stefaniak, 130.

Ellis, 363. Ellis also describes sublime as “itself a masculine category in opposition to the feminine category of beauty.”

<sup>348</sup> DeNora “Embodiment and Opportunity,” 186, and 189-190.

<sup>349</sup> DeNora in “Embodiment...” goes on to associate this “hardness” as aesthetic principle with assertion of masculinity to counterbalance the traditionally “feminine” musical activity. She emphasizes the (possibly) phallic symbolisms by listing Beethoven’s “steel pen”<sup>\*</sup> and the “increasingly elongated piano with iron reinforcement” in conjunction.

<sup>\*</sup>Beethoven’s “steel pen” is explained on the same page. It is Schumann finding an archetypal masculinity and creative “force” in Beethoven and his relic. “I once found on Beethoven’s grave... a steel pen, which ever since I have reverently preserved.”

data shows that 79% of Beethoven's piano works were performed by men between 1793 and 1810, while only 26% of Mozart's piano works were performed by men between 1787-1810.<sup>350</sup>

To be taken seriously, female pianists had to combat the denigrating stereotypes such as their “fixation on the pleasing details of artworks instead of on deeper, intellectual issues or larger, ambitious structures.”<sup>351</sup> They transcended the gender bias in the notion of *Werktreue*, by becoming a vessel, or a medium in a *séance*, to the composer's artistry. Clara had an additional advantage. Her debut as a *wunderkind* at the age of nine helped establish her image as a girl into her adulthood. She benefited by the Romantic notion of children as having a special insight into the truth. Robert described Clara's 1832 concerts in *Der Komet* as her navigation past superficial surfaces “with extraordinary insight [allowing her to uncover] things hidden from – and even hazardous to – other musicians. ‘The child looks calmly into the sea of beams – an older person would have been blinded in the radiance.’”<sup>352</sup> She would not be looking into the sea of beams or anything else, if she was looking at the score. In addition, the display of musical literacy would be less innocent-looking. In 1838, she performed “Appassionata” again in Vienna. It inspired a poem “Clara Wieck und Beethoven” by an Austrian poet, Franz Grillparzer. He described her as “unlocking the ‘diamond-hard’ shrine of Beethoven's artistry not through learned investigation or strenuous struggle but through inborn insight:

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<sup>350</sup> Tia DeNora, “Embodiment and Opportunity,” 188. Numbers don't lie, but an interpretation of numbers can be manipulated. Between 1787-1810, Beethoven was still performing and composers often performed their own works. How many programs were put in the data, she does not clarify.

<sup>351</sup> Stefaniak, 46.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid., 74-75.

‘Daydreaming in *young girl* fashion / She sinks her white fingers into the water / They seize and lift and grasp – it is the key!’”<sup>353</sup> An inborn insight would be more effectively convincing if she was to channel the music without the score.

There were even some that recognized a true Hegelian artistic soul in Clara despite her gender or age, independent of what or whom she performed. In a remarkable *Encyclopaide* entry “*Wiek (oder Wieck)*, Clara” also from 1838, Gustav Schilling praised her as a total combination of what her male competitors had to offer.

[Wieck’s tone] is not merely round and tender, like perhaps that of a Hummel was, not merely elegant like that of a Moscheles, not merely brilliant and grand, like that of a Kalkbrenner; it is also not merely sentimental like that of a Liszt, or distinguished through many bizarre features like that of a Chopin, but rather it is all of these things together, enlivened by an enchanting geniality, that makes of the most triumphant dexterity only a flexible, docile servant. ....she has become one with her art so much that her entire being seems to come up from within it. Every tone that she attacks sound from her own soul. Her playing is the innermost life in all its shadows and light, down to the finest nuance.<sup>354</sup>

Clara Weick would probably have had a formidable career without being married to Robert Schumann even after her transition into adulthood, despite her gender. However, her impact on music history became enhanced by her association with Robert. Robert idolized Clara in his prolific writing as a critic. While many writers of music saw virtuosity and the spirit of *Werktreue* as antithetical to each other, Robert presented an unusual vision for transcendent virtuosity as an ideal to aspire to through his writings as a

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<sup>353</sup> Stefaniak, 75. [emphasis added]

<sup>354</sup> “Wiek (oder Wieck), Clara” in Schilling, *Encyclopadie*, 7:861. Quoted in Stefaniak, 74.

music critic.<sup>355</sup> Alexander Stefaniak dedicates his recent book, *Schumann's Virtuosity*, to exploring this negotiation. Schumann posited the notion of the “poetic.” He used the term in case-by-case basis, never clearly defining it, and always with slightly different connotations. But, overall, it was “music that transcended both the ‘mechanical’ (to become organic, animated by inner life) and the ‘external’ (to harbor an internal essence),” that was “‘original,’ ‘fantastic,’ ‘new,’ ‘unknown,’ and ‘dream-like.’”<sup>356</sup> In a ‘dream-like’ liminal position between consciousness and unconsciousness, perhaps Clara’s memory was seen to have achieved a perfect balance between virtuosity and *Werktreue*, and between understanding music and accepting its ineffability. She became “the epitome of poetic performance” in Robert’s published writings, emphasizing her “quality of interiority” as distinguishing her virtuosity.<sup>357</sup> He may have, as a critic, helped elevate Clara’s status as a transcendent virtuoso in his virtuoso discourse.

In addition to venerating Clara publicly as a critic, Robert may have given Clara access to the traditionally-masculine realm of sublime heroism through his compositions. Even before their marriage, during the 1830s, she was acknowledged to have special insights to his works as his close friend, and then his fiancé, in addition to being practically the only pianist that performed his pieces. The first few pieces that Clara chose to play of Robert’s were ones that were especially praised for their Beethovenian sublimity: *Toccata*, which she premiered in 1834, and *Études Symphoniques*, which she

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<sup>355</sup> Hunter, “To Play as though from the Soul of the Composer,” 357-398. Hunter presents a view of performers as the true Hegelian agent that completes the trinity of composer-performance-audience, in her willful participation in the realization of each entity in this trinity as a part of the larger whole.

<sup>356</sup> Stefaniak, 54-55.

<sup>357</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

played in the year that it was published, 1837. Stefaniak attests to their evocation of “Beethoven’s ‘heroic,’ middle-period symphonies, specifically the ‘Eroica.’ They thereby referred to music whose extremes of musical tension (even violence), apotheosis culminations, and (especially in the ‘Eroica’) implied narratives of masculine heroism embodied the sublime for its enthusiasts.”<sup>358</sup> Robert became Clara’s passport into the realm of sublime and masculine heroism.

The topic of Clara’s intimate insight into Robert’s music is discussed further in David Ferris’ *Public Performance and Private Understanding: Clara Wieck's Concerts in Berlin*. Ferris compares Clara’s repertoire and studies the difference in her offerings to the public concerts and private soirée. The time period is limited to the winter of 1839-40 when Clara was in a forced exile in Berlin, awaiting trial against her father regarding her pending marriage to Robert. Ferris attributes her psychological distress and consequent performance anxiety as one reason for her different offerings to the public and to the soirée. She retracted Bach fugues from her public program, afraid of memory slips.<sup>359</sup> She only performed Robert’s music three times publicly; a single selection each from Robert’s *Noveletten* twice and a complete performance of the Sonata in G Minor on February 1, 1840. Her trip was unplanned and the duration of her stay pended on her father’s compliance with the court procedure. Concerts were often planned at the last minute, and she was constantly in ill health especially around her public concerts, having

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<sup>358</sup> Stefaniak, 145.

<sup>359</sup> Ferris, 352.

to cancel one of her scheduled concerts. It was as though public performance represented social judgements to her, although she would always come out in triumph.

A review from the concert explains her ambivalence about performing her fiancé's work in public, as well as her own fear of public appearance. Although her playing was commended, her choice of pieces in the program was questioned, especially in regard to her future-husband's sonata.

The only question is, whether a keyboard sonata ... of this school belongs before a large, mixed audience? Whether a naïve, poetic creation, which originated in the quiet workshop of a deep, sensitive nature, is suitable for the loud open market place of life? Whether a composer [*Tondichter*], who is unconcerned with the outer world in which he lives, and composes and writes [*componirut und dichten*] only for his own heart and at most a few others, can be understood by the masses?<sup>360</sup>

The review correctly reflects the reasons for Robert and Clara's preference for the private sphere. They did disregard the public musical events as too commercial and "impure," soiled with profit, politics and other non-musical incentives.<sup>361</sup> Possibly because of such reception from the public it was not until February 7, 1856, the year of his death, that she would perform any of his major solo works in public again.<sup>362</sup>

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<sup>360</sup> Tuhn, February 28, 1840 in *NZfM*. Quoted in Ferris, 397.

<sup>361</sup> David Gramit, "Selling the Serious: The Commodification of Music and Resistance to It in Germany, circa 1800," in *The Musician as Entrepreneur, 1700-1914: Managers, Charlatans, and Idealists*, ed. William Weber (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 182. Although musicians had to somehow commodify their offerings in order to retain their activities as financially sustainable, the intangibility and the inutility that they were promoting in their music posed a challenge. "...both the need to market serious music and the need to deny that that music was marketed were keenly felt, and that tension, in turn, can help explain the utility of explicitly non-utilitarian music at several levels of a society in which market exchange and the accumulation of capital were becoming dominant."

<sup>362</sup> Ferris, 356.

However, as demonstrated by Ferris, even during her Berlin exile in 1837 in private settings, among the *kenners* (connoisseurs), she felt at ease, in her own element, and in control. She sought out influential music lovers to introduce Robert's music to. Playing Robert's music in such private settings became a solace for her during their forced separation. After Robert's death, moreover, Clara became an avid performer and promoter of her late-husband's works. She brought his music to the public concert stage as though to compensate for his tragic death by promoting his posterity.<sup>363</sup> In addition, her program choices became increasingly more canonic, centering around the now-staple "classical" repertoire. Hanslick praised the accomplishment of Clara's "true mission" as a "priestess": "By the middle of the 1850s (and especially after Clara's concerts), no pianist dared to offer a concert program on which Bach (occasionally Scarlatti and Handel), Beethoven, Chopin, and Schumann did not figure."<sup>364</sup>

There is a database analysis of all of her 1300 extant concert programs (both of private and public, as long as the pieces performed are available for date input) between her debut on October 28<sup>th</sup>, 1828 to her last concert on March 12<sup>th</sup>, 1891.<sup>365</sup> The data itself is revealing of many things. Contrary to Clara's image as one of the most prominent

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<sup>363</sup> Reinhard Kopiez, Andreas C. Lehmann, and Janina Klassen, "Clara Schumann's Collection of Playbills: A Historiometric Analysis of Life-span Development, Mobility, and Repertoire Canonization," *Poetics* 37, (January 1, 2009): 50-73. *ScienceDirect*, EBSCOhost [accessed December 7, 2016], 69. There is a more cynical view one can take to her choice of playing Robert's works mostly after his death. That his dramatic death gave "her competitive advantage as the Schumann widow. Here she held a unique selling proposition...because she could claim to be the leading authority on his music and enhanced this position by editing his works and transmitting them through teaching. This allowed her to be sought after even in later stages of her career."

<sup>364</sup> Hanslick, *Geschichte des Concertwessens in Wien*, 1:418. Quoted in Stefaniak, 195.

<sup>365</sup> Kopiez, Lehmann, and Klassen, 50-73.

interpreters of music by Beethoven, Bach and Brahms, in total she performed Robert's music (solo, as well as chamber and concertos) most frequently (28.4%). This is despite the aforementioned fact of her not performing Robert's music in public frequently before his death. The second place goes to Mendelssohn (12.0%), then Beethoven (11.6%) and Chopin (10.8%). All of the top four composers combined would make up for 69.5% of her repertoire. In addition, the data analysis reveals that later in her career she was more likely to play pieces that were older: in her own repertoire, but also pieces that had had more years between its composition date to her performance. She was playing fewer works by contemporary composers later in her career. All of this evidence seem to confirm her participation in the canon formation.

However, her professional promotion of canon was not motivated solely on artistic basis. The challenge she faced as a female pianist played a role in her repertoire choice. Canon formation had partially to do with the gendering of the repertoire and female pianists' negotiation between remaining feminine and asserting their artistic integrity. They were forced to explore the pre-Beethoven, more classical and therefore "feminine" repertoire, or to offer themselves up as a subconscious and a trans-gender medium, to be taken seriously. Henri Blanchard, a prolific contributor to *Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris*, explained why women chose serious music: "To give themselves more weight, more credit, they all declare themselves priestesses of the cult that the artistic world dedicates to Beethoven."<sup>366</sup> Clara also had her own personal life to contend with. The program data analysis suggests that shifting numbers correlated with her life

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<sup>366</sup> Henri-Louis Blanchard, *Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris* 16, no. 50 (16 December 1849), 394. Quoted in Ellis, 371.



circumstances. Many aspects of her life were such that it became increasingly difficult for her to add new repertoire to her concert programming as she advanced in her age. Her family life often presented her with time consuming, economically taxing issues. In addition, she had hand injuries that forced her to cancel and take breaks from her performance schedule. Her longest break was between mid-December of 1873 to March 1875. Researchers at *Institut für Musikphysiologie und Musiker-Medizin* demonstrate that the pain in her arms were partially worsened by the demands of Brahms's Piano Concerto No. 1, Op. 15 (1858), and *Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel*, Op. 24 (1861).<sup>367</sup>

One's course of life is never entirely under one's own control. Clara's repertoire and performance practice were products of circumstances just as much as they were her own willful artistic choices. Her father emphasized sensory and intuitive experience of music in Clara's early music education, in the spirit of Jean-Jacque Rousseau's pedagogical ideals, leading Clara to naturally perform from memory. When her memorized delivery of canonized works was seen through the lenses of *Werktreue*, it became a significant and symbolic act, reflecting the German Romantic Idealism. Memorization became an obligation especially after the repertoire became increasingly theoretical, abstract and more demanding, even though memorizing these works became increasingly more difficult. These must have contributed to her stage fright. Her performance anxiety might have been both a cause and a symptom of her many, possibly psychosomatic, physical symptoms that kept her performances increasingly difficult in

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<sup>367</sup> Altenmuller and Kopiez, 101-108.

her long career as a pianist. Her letter to Brahms from 1871 attests to her stage fright and her struggle to keep playing from memory: “Though I am often so nervous from one piece to the next, I cannot make the decision to play without notes; it always seems to me that it is almost as though my wings were clipped – and yet they still retain some buoyancy – more for art than for life, which never ceases to bring me new trials.”<sup>368</sup>

Her wings were clipped as are ours today. The shift in piano performance practice from *memoria rerum* to *memoria verborum* has enslaved us to canons, depriving us of spontaneous musicality as our innately human expression. Pianists strive for absolute fidelity to every arbitrary detail of the overwhelmingly canonized score while attempting to focus on the overall form and the spirit of *Werktreue*, all in hopes of the spiritual transcendence promised only if their execution is perfect. Under such pressure, memorization become an even more unbearable burden to many pianists. Roman teachers of rhetoric, Cicero (106-43 B.C.) and Quintilian (35-100 A.D.) both agreed that *memoria rerum* was superior to *memoria verborum* in memorizing a speech. Verbatim memory required too much memory for details. In addition, it was unstable. Forgetting one word could lead to losing the rest of the speech. *Memoria rerum* was considered more easily applicable.<sup>369</sup>

When the Egyptian God Theuth, the inventor of writing, approached the King of Egypt Thamus offering his invention in Plato’s *Phaedrus*, he refuses:

“If men learn this, it will implant forgetfulness in their souls” he told the god.  
 “They will cease to exercise their memory and become forgetful; they will

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<sup>368</sup> Reich, 280.

<sup>369</sup> Foer, 122-3.

rely on that which is written, calling things to remembrance no longer from within themselves, but by means of external marks. What you have discovered is a recipe not for memory, but for reminding. And it is no true wisdom that you offer your disciples, but only its semblance, for by telling them of many things without teaching them anything, you will make them seem to know much, while for the most part they will know nothing. And as men filled not with wisdom but with the conceit of wisdom, they will be burden to their fellow-men.”<sup>370</sup>

Memorization as a discipline as it is treated in today’s piano pedagogy risks pianists mistaking memorization for understanding, just as Thamus worried that his subjects would mistake possession of written information as knowledge. Nor does being able to develop a theoretical discourse on music or aesthetics make one an authority on music, or creator of beauty. Our current practice of memorization has risen at least partially as a result of arcane abstract theories. It is time that we reevaluate why we continue the tradition of memorization and if in fact it is serving music, beauty and ourselves.

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<sup>370</sup> Foer, 138-9.

## CONCLUSION

My hope is for this thesis to serve as a catalyst for further research related to the aspect of memory in musical performance and overall musical experience. As a history of performance practice, this document serves as a reminder of how blindly we have accepted the culture of classical music from the nineteenth century. The repertoire, presentational format, and performance practice of mainstream classical music have been stagnant since the mid-nineteenth century, the period discussed in my thesis. The imposing air of moral authority asserted by German Romantic Idealism extensively effected the culture surrounding classical music until it became indistinguishably entwined. It led to the classical music industry focusing on preservation with a subconscious sense of moral obligation for nearly two centuries now. Through this research, I was able to identify some of the historical backgrounds to the actual music and its practice apart from its theoretical, philosophical, and Romantic narrative. As a result, I now feel more empowered with the knowledge to make more informed decisions about my own practice: whether to remain focused on preserving a form of traditional art, or to cater it to make it my own artistic expression to enjoy communicating with my audience. The choice becomes about the survival of classical music and one's artistic identity when we consider this document as an examination of a performance practice as a reflection of its social context. The genesis of memorization as a piano performance practice was, as I have shown, influenced by its surrounding circumstances: the Industrial Revolution, urbanization, evolution of the piano as an instrument and its effect on the repertoire, German Romantic Idealism, etc. How does the preservation of this practice reflect our own context and identity in the twenty-first century? Finally, as a brief historical survey

of a general shift away from *memoria rerum* to an extreme form of *memoria verborum*, it challenges us to reconsider what and how we should remember in order to establish a secure and positive identity and sense of our surrounding world. It might offer us a new perspective as we reevaluate the progressive tendency in our culture to trust our knowledge to various forms of external memory, disregarding our own capacity to actively memorize information and remember our experience. Our dependence on external memory demonstrates the priority of accuracy over our subjectivity, just as we have been, for so long, privileging fidelity to the canon over the pianist's personal authenticity in judging a piano performance.

I would like to identify some areas for future research. A survey of early conservatory audition and examination requirements in regard to memorization would help us to know more precisely when the practice became obligatory. Studies of historical memory slips would shed more light on the increasing pressure placed on the performers relative to the aggrandizement of canonized repertoire and ritualization of concerts. Similarly, examination of the relationship between obligatory memorization and accounts of stage fright might reveal that perhaps the pressures placed on performers have become punishing and inhumane in service of no one. I wonder about all the sonatas written for "*Klavier und* (another instrument)," and when the non-piano instrumental part was considered "accompanimental": were these piano parts ever memorized as a general practice? Research on when improvisation ceased to be a part of piano pedagogy, and when memorization became a skill to be taught, would indicate a significant shift in the history of performance practice. There were some unverifiable passing mentions of memorization becoming standardized by the 1830s in Paris, before the German speaking

regions.<sup>371</sup> I wonder whether these claims had any basis to them. Marie Pleyel (1811-1875), for example, played from memory. Being French, they would have been less under the influence of German Romantic Idealism, so what motivated them to play from memory? Lastly, among the socially marginalized groups of people that emerged as mostly non-composing performers who helped promote the notion of “serious” music as advocated by the German Romantic Idealists, I found many musicians with Jewish heritage: Ignaz Moscheles (1794-1870), Ferdinand Hiller (1811-1885), Anton Rubinstein (1829-1894), and Joseph Joachim (1831-1907), are the most notable examples. Enormously successful and influential pianists Friedrich Kalkbrenner, Sigismond Thalberg (1812-1871), and Henri Herz (1803-1888) also had Jewish backgrounds. Many of A. B. Marx’s biographical entries start with the fact that he was the son of a Jewish doctor. The effect of anti-Semitism in the nineteenth-century Europe on these musicians and their professional and artistic choices was something that I decided should be its own independent topic of research and not a part of this thesis.

The emergence of minorities among the non-composing pianists as submissive conduits to the canons was at least in part a result of discriminating stereotypes against the socially marginalized. The obligation of memorization has similar effects of

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<sup>371</sup> Alessandra Comini, *The Changing Image of Beethoven: A Study in Mythmaking* (New York, NY: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 1987), 194. Comini states how Clara’s memorized performance in 1837 surprised the Berlin audience by the practice: “...still unknown in Germany, Clara had picked up in Paris [the practice] of playing from memory.” However, there are contrary remarks that Clara’s memorized performance surprised the Paris audience in 1832.

Joan Chissell, *Clara Schumann: A Dedicated Spirit – A Study of her Life and Work* (New York, NY: Taplinger Publishing Co., Inc., 1983), 23. “[During her stay in Paris] Clara impressed her small audience by including an extemporization, and by playing all else in the programme from memory.”

oppression, effacing the performers in concerts as ritualized worship of the canon, as was explored in my third chapter. The effect is more than just symbolic; memorization enslaves pianists to the canons in the course of their training. Because our training starts so early, and because memorizing the simpler and shorter pieces for our lessons come naturally to the “talented,” methods of memorizing music is usually not a part of our early training. When these pianists grow up and face the demanding canons in volumes under the pressure of professionalism, the rote/instinctive memory that worked earlier becomes far less effective, and unreliable. It drives them to practice longer and harder out of desperation. Most pianists consider memorization to be one of the biggest challenges they face during their training to become professionals, or even just to play a recital. Many quit the pursuit of a career as a piano soloist because of its burden and pressure. The fear of memory slip is one of the main reasons for stage fright: even for Clara Schumann, this was true. Pianists today are often what Boethius described as slaves: “the type which buries itself in instruments... separated from the understanding of musical knowledge.”<sup>372</sup> However, we do not end up in this position out of vanity or lack of capacity to be otherwise, but often out of fear of memory slips, and usually due to the tradition of unquestioning, submissive performers.

The knowledge and confidence I acquired through the work I did for this thesis empowered me as an Asian female musician, significantly altering my view of myself, my surrounding world, and my art. Most importantly, I realized that the true art of time lies in performance, not composition: that the promotion of the canon as works of fine art

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<sup>372</sup> Calvin M. Bower, “Boethius’ *The Principles of Music: An Introduction, Translation and Commentary*,” [PhD thesis, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1966], 101-104. Quoted in Weiss and Taruskin, 37.

is impractical, at best. I am grateful to have had the opportunity and support to do this work, and proud that because of it, I am a better, and more confident artist today, with much more to offer to the world.



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## APPENDIX A: The Timeline of Events

- Mid-1300s      The precise system of notation is basically completed. (P. 5)
- 1363            Machaut instructs the dedicatee of his piece to recreate it faithfully to the score “without adding or subtracting.” (P. 8-9)
- 1440            The invention of printing press. (P.7)
- c. 1500          Technology to print music becomes available. (P.7)
- 1700            Christofori invents the *pianoforte*: a harpsichord with dynamic variations with only 49 keys. (P. 57)
- 1735            Aesthetics as a branch of philosophy is established as a “science of sensory cognition.” It separated the “visual sense of space, and aural sense of time.” (P. 77)
- 1757            Edmund Burke’s *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* positioned the notion of sublime as dichotomous to the notion of beauty, and promotes textless instrumental music for its sublime opacity. (P. 52)
- 1760s           First records of piano being featured in public performances. (P. 56)
- 1762            Jean-Jacques Roussau’s pedagogical treatise, *Émile, or Treatise on Education*, promotes sensory experience before intellectual understanding. (P. 22)
- 1765            The nine-year-old Mozart becomes a subject of scientific study by D. Barrington, but his musical memory is not studied particularly. (P. 16)
- 1766            J.C. Bach’s six keyboard sonatas Op. 5 nominates the pianoforte as an alternative to the harpsichord on its title page. (P. 56)
- 1775            A blind pianist and singer, Maria Theresia von Paradis begins performing in Viennese salons and concerts. (P.14)
- 1778            Mozart’s encounter with a female harpist with “an incomparable memory,” but without any intellectual interests in music. (P. 16)
- 1781            Mozart premieres two of his violin sonatas from memory, having only had the time to write down the violin part. (P. 12)
- 1787            Mozart almost dismisses young Beethoven, mistaking his improvisation for a memorized showpiece – most likely apocryphal. (P.2)
- 1787            Wackenroder’s novella “The Strange Musical Life of the Musical Artist Joseph Berglinger: In Two Parts,” in his book *Confession and Fantasies* is published. (P. 82)

- 1788 Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* posits that there is a gap between our subjective perception of the world and how the world really is, starting a philosophical inquiry into the relationship between our subjective experience and the objective reality among the German Romantic Idealists. (P. 75)
- 1795 Schiller, in his *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* promotes formalism. "Contents should do nothing, form everything." (P. 90)
- 1797 André Grétry's *Memoir* contains the first known example of proposals for an architectural design to conceal the musicians from the audience. (P. 78)
- 1802 An early example of anti-virtuosic rhetoric: Wilhelm Triest's lengthy essay, "On Traveling Virtuosos," published in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*. (P.43-44)
- 1807 Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* argues that the individual can free himself by striving to become a part of a larger entity, resulting in an enhancement of both. (P. 87)
- 1808 Beethoven's Fifth is premiered. (P. 106)
- 1810 E.T.A. Hoffmann's review of Beethoven's fifth symphony, associating Beethoven to the notion of sublime. (P. 106-107)
- 1810 Goethe's *Theory of Color* poses questions about the relationship between the observer's optical experience and the actual world of light and colors. (P. 76)
- 1811 Beethoven's "Emperor" Concerto, Op. 73 "no si fa una cadenza (do not make a cadenza)." (P. 11)
- 1813 Philharmonic Society of London is founded based on a Hegelian ideal for democracy among the orchestral musicians. (P. 87-88)
- 1814 Longier's piano practice aid, Chiroplast is invented. (P. 67)
- 1815 Metronome is patented. (P. 67)
- 1819 Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation* is published (P. 82)
- 1820s The piano is increasingly mechanized for louder sounds and faster actions; the perfection of repetition, and the introduction of metal braces. (P. 58)
- 1821 Paganini's technique is analyzed and published by Kapellmeister Carl Guhr. (P.66)
- 1821 Dietrich Nikolaus Winkel invented the "componium," a mechanical improviser that used early algorithms. (P. 70)

- 1821           The Prussian government incorporated Logier's chiroplast and his teaching method with group lessons into its "unprecedented music reform...to use music as a cultural resource to unite members of Prussia's Bildungsbürgertum." (P. 67)
- 1823           Kalkbrenner publishes *Effusio Musica* to raving reviews. (P.3)
- 1828           The eight-year-old Clara Wieck's debut at the Gewandhaus (P. 25)
- 1831           Paganini's memorization is praised by a London reviewer; "[Memorization] gives the air of improvisation." (P. 13)
- 1831           Robert Schumann gives up his aspiration to become a concert pianist, due to hand injury (P. 71)
- 1832           Liszt hears Paganini for the first time (P. 62)
- 1834           A.B. Marx fails to identify Kalkbrenner's false claim of "improvising" his already published *Effusio Musica* – most likely apocryphal. (P. 1)
- 1835           Liszt publishes an essay "Concerning the Situation of Artists and Their Condition in Society" proposing that music should unite the theater and the church in an attempt to reach out to people who have forsaken their religious faith. (P. 96)
- 1835           Henri Herz patents Dactylion. (P. 67)
- 1837           Clara Wieck in Berlin, playing her entire program from memory, including all three movements of Beethoven's "Appassionata" sonata, Op. 57. (P. 72)
- 1837           A.B. Marx publishes his *Theory and Practice of musical composition*, where among many other things, he posits the understanding of each musical detail depends on one's understanding of the entire piece. (P. 120)
- 1838           Liszt's triumphant tour of Vienna (P. 36-37)
- 1839-1840     Clara is in Berlin, awaiting trial against her father regarding her pending marriage to Robert Schumann, as discussed by Ferris. (P. 128-130)
- 1840           Liszt's first "recital" in London to cold reception. (P. 37-38)
- 1841-42       Lisztomania, (P. 50)
- 1846           Wagner coins the term "absolute music" as music that is "isolated, sterile, and irrelevant to life" to justify his opera. (P. 98)
- 1847           Liszt announces his retirement from the concert stage at the age of thirty-six. (P. 71)
- 1854           Eduard Hanslick's *Vom Musikalische- Schönen* (The Beautiful in Music) separates what music *is* from what music *does*, disassociating the nineteenth-century formalism from the notion of music of the spheres. (P. 91-92)

- 1861 Charles Halle presents a series of recitals featuring Beethoven cycle. His memorization is reviewed unfavorably, and from the third concert on, he placed the score on the stand. (P. 115)
- 1863 Hermann von Helmholtz publishes *On the Sensations of Tone*. The physics of sound and our physiology of sound perception are revealed.
- 1876 Wagner's theatre in Bayreuth: a famous example of concert hall design to conceal the musicians from the audience. (P. 78)
- 1878 Hans von Bülow visits the Musical Academy of the Blind in Birmingham, England (P. 19)
- 1882 Wagner begs the public not to applaud before the premier of *Parsifal*. (P. 99)
- 1891 Clara Wieck-Schumann's last concert (P. 21)

## APPENDIX B: Birth and Death Years of Relevant Figures

Tartini, Giuseppe (1692-1770)  
Farinelli (1705-1782)  
Rousseau, Jean-Jacques (1712-1778)  
Bach, C.P.E. (1714-1788)  
Kant, Immanuel (1724-1804)  
Swieten, Gottfried van (1733-1803)  
Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von (1749-1832)  
Mozart, W.A. (1756-1791)  
Paradis, Maria Theresia von (1759-1824)  
Industrial Revolution (*c.* 1760-*c.* 1840)  
Beethoven, L.v. (1770-1827)  
Schlegel, Friedrich (1772-1829)  
Wackenroder, Wilhelm Heinrich (1773-1798)  
American Revolution (1776-83)  
Paganini, Niccolo (1782-1840)  
Kalkbrenner, Friedrich (1785-1849)  
Wieck, Friedrich (1785-1873)  
French Revolution (1789-99)  
Czerny, Carl (1791-1857)  
Marx, A.B. (1795-1866)  
Braille, Louis (1809-1852)  
Chopin, Frederic (1810-1849)  
Schumann, Robert (1810-1856)  
Pleyel, Marie (1811-1875)  
Liszt, Franz (1811-1886)  
Thalberg, Sigismond (1812-1871)

Wagner, Richard (1813-1883)

Henselt, Adolf (1814-1889)

Halle, Charles (1819-1895)

Wieck-Schumann, Clara (1819-1896)

Helmholtz, Hermann von (1821-1894)

Hanslick, Eduard (1825-1904)

Bethune, Thomas Greene “Blind Tom” (1849-1908)